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SURVEY

A Journal of Soviet and East European Studies

No. 59 **April 1966**

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The cover design, by *Colin Banks* and *John Miles*, shows a ' poème-objet ' by *Jiri Kolar*, Czech writer, poet, and artist. Collection *Colin Banks*.

Editorial offices, Summit House, 1 Langham Place, London, W.1.
Subscription office, Ilford House, 133 Oxford Street, London, W.1.
Subscription rates: £1 10s. or $4 a year. Single copies 7/6 or $1.25.

American Distributors: Franklin Square Subscription Agency, 545 Cedar Lane, Teaneck, New Jersey, U.S.A., with whom subscriptions may be entered.

Survey is published by Information Bulletin, Ltd., 133 Oxford Street, London, W.1, on behalf of the Congress for Cultural Freedom.

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SPOTLIGHT ON CZECHOSLOVAKIA

DEVELOPMENTS in Czechoslovakia in the last few years have not received the attention they deserve. This applies most of all to the realm of arts and letters which has witnessed the re-establishment of the earlier Czechoslovak interest in *avant-garde* art, the resumption of cultural ties with the West, and a great deal of artistic experiment and achievement, particularly in the cinema and theatre.

To speak of the need for a cultural dialogue in this situation is somewhat misleading: there is no need to establish formal cultural relations where real cultural ties exist. What is needed is, to use the words of Annie Oakley, the possibility of 'doing what comes naturally'. The language of contemporary art may not be the most communicative, but it is one language. Culturally, Czechoslovakia, the most western country in eastern Europe before the war, is finding its way back to the same position.

The present issue of *Survey* is largely devoted to Czechoslovakia. We have asked some of the most distinguished art critics and writers in Prague to illuminate the cultural scene. The economic reform is assessed by two economists who have recently spent a good deal of time studying the subject on the spot. The political scene is reviewed by an observer who knows it not only through continuous study, but also from frequent visits.

After a period of ferment the situation in the country presents some disquieting features. The writers and artists are displaying some anxiety about a possible tightening of the cultural reins. The economists and the managers are afraid that the resistance at the medium level of the party apparatus will prevent the effective development of the new economic model. The desire expressed by Julius Strinka (*Kulturny Zivot*, 26 November 1965) for a reform of 'the existing political relations and the existing structure of political power' to ensure 'institutionalised criticism' and political pluralism is not likely to be met. While some encouraging events continue to occur, such as the rehabilitation of the twelve social-democrats unjustly sentenced in 1954, there are some threatening signs on the literary scene, such as the closing down of the literary journal *Tvar*, and on 1 January 1966 the official fortnightly, *Zivot Strany*, criticised the shortcomings of the two main literary journals, *Literarni Noviny* and *Kulturny Zivot*.

The warning has thus been sounded, but the extent of the Czech cultural *risorgimento* is such that an attempt to freeze it again may still be politically embarrassing. However that may be, and the issues will probably not be completely clarified in the near future, the Czech intellectuals, artists, and writers have clearly shown in their attitudes and achievements in recent years that they are once more part of the universal republic of arts and letters and that they cannot be deprived of their European heritage.

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POLITICS IN PRAGUE

Viktor Meier

IF some disappointment is felt that the hopes of rapid change cherished last year have not been satisfied, it should be remembered that in a country like Czechoslovakia rapid change is not feasible. There are too many obstacles in its path—on the one hand the mass of the population (especially the Czechs) have adopted certain habits which are difficult to change, and on the other hand there is the whole structure and composition of the régime and its machinery. If these and other circumstances are taken into consideration, then Czechoslovakia's development over the past year may well be regarded more favourably. In some sectors at least the points have been switched, with consequences which will become apparent only this year or next.

One of the most important events of the past year was the first public display of differences of opinion between Prague and Moscow. These were accompanied by a marked intensification of national sentiment, particularly in the Czech provinces, and there again especially among the younger generation. To be sure, in official quarters the differences with the Soviet Union are being played down and brushed aside as 'speculations by the West', but their existence is not denied and they are known, in broad outline at least, to the general public.

The differences arose in connection with the negotiations for a new Soviet-Czech trade agreement for the period 1966–70. In the first place the Soviet Union made a lot of difficulties about deliveries of wheat; furthermore it was critical of many Czech products and, as the newspaper *Hospodarske Noviny* wrote after the pact was signed, it was 'categorically' insistent on the question of spare parts. Moscow also turned down many of the requests put forward by the Czechs, so that a number of sections of the Czech five-year plan, which had already been worked out, had to be revised and modified.

It was, however, the wheat deliveries which undoubtedly presented the biggest problem. The Soviet Union had hitherto always delivered considerable quantities of bread grain to Czechoslovakia, which, both as an industrial nation and in consequence of its agricultural policies, has never been able to produce sufficient wheat to cover its own requirements, even in years with a normal harvest. During the last few years the quantity delivered by the USSR was stabilised at a little below 1·5 million tons and in addition Czechoslovakia had to buy further quantities of wheat from the West. But it could never raise sufficient hard currency to cover its total needs in the West, for almost four-fifths of all Czech exports go to the East. The country also has great difficulty in finding markets in the West for its products, which are considered out of date. It is not quite clear whether the Soviet Union, in consequence of its own poor harvest, at first refused to deliver any more wheat

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at all in future, or whether it wanted only to reduce the volume of deliveries to the level of about 0·9 million tons fixed in the previous agreements. At all events, the Soviet stand was regarded in a very serious light. In his speech at Prostejov on 28 October, President Novotny admitted that not all problems had been solved by his visit to the Soviet Union in August, and that Brezhnev's visit to Prague in the middle of October was also connected with this question. It was not until 5 December that Novotny could finally announce the figure for Soviet wheat deliveries in the following year, and on 15 December the Slovak party newspaper *Pravda* for the first time publicly confirmed that both during the Czech party and state visits to Moscow, as also during Brezhnev's visit to Prague, negotiations about the wheat problem had been carried on.

Later, in connection with Gromyko's visit in December, it was officially announced that the Soviet foreign minister had not come to clear up any 'misunderstandings', yet on 16 December the deputy foreign minister, Klicka, wrote somewhat significantly in *Rude Pravo* that unity of outlook on large questions did not by any means preclude small socialist countries from developing their own initiatives in foreign policy.

KLICKA did not enlarge further on the question of what initiatives in foreign policy he was referring to. It is however known—and President Novotny hinted at it in his speech—that ever since the formation of the new government in Bonn, contacts are being made for the purpose of achieving some 'normalisation' of relations between the German Federal Republic and Czechoslovakia. What this normalisation will finally look like is not yet clear. Czechoslovakia, as was once more stressed by Novotny in Prostejov, demands unconditional acceptance of the status quo. This means on the one hand the annulment of the Munich agreement, on the other the renunciation of all claims on behalf of the Sudeten Germans. In return, Czechoslovakia seems prepared to renounce its claim to compensation for its sufferings under the German occupation.

These are the so-called 'large-scale' aspects of a German-Czech reconciliation. However, for the time being there seem better prospects for a 'small-scale' normalisation, above all for the conclusion of a trade pact and an exchange of missions. Prague would prefer West Germany—in spite of the Hallstein Doctrine—not to rest at establishing a trade mission in the Czech capital, but to proceed immediately with the setting-up of some kind of political representation. Yet Czechoslovakia is reluctant to put its signature to any trade pact with the Federal Republic which includes the so-called 'Berlin clause', accepted by other communist states and even by the Soviet Union. Prague argues that this clause, originally inserted for purely practical reasons, has in the meantime been exploited politically by Bonn to such an extent that the Czechoslovak Republic can no longer accept it. The

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Soviet-East German treaty signed in the summer of 1964 is also cited as constituting a further obstacle.

Various unofficial attempts to get to the bottom of Czechoslovakia's attitude on this question come up against a number of other arguments, in addition to those already mentioned. One is told that in Berlin it cannot be in Czechoslovakia's interest to have Germans—and that goes for both sections—at the controls. Every 'Germanisation' of the Berlin question would only lead to conflict, and since the Czechoslovak Republic is particularly averse to such a development, it must *ipso facto* reject any formula which could be interpreted as signifying Czechoslovakian recognition of West Berlin as politically part of the Federal Republic. Nevertheless, Czechoslovakia would be prepared to agree that a West German mission should *de facto* act also on behalf of the citizens and affairs of West Berlin; it would in addition be ready to concede that the trade pact with the Federal Republic should apply to West Berlin as well. All that now remained was to find a formula acceptable to both sides. Meanwhile trade between Czechoslovakia and West Germany is developing very satisfactorily without a pact; the Federal Republic has already ousted Britain from its former position as Czechoslovakia's leading trade partner in the capitalist world.

Probably Czechoslovakia is stressing details so much because within the framework of normalisation 'on a small scale', it is doing its utmost to promote a 'large-scale' settlement. The factors retarding the solution of this problem should not be sought exclusively in Prague. It is difficult to understand why the Federal Republic is so unwilling to jettison the Munich agreement once and for all, especially as—in contrast to the question of the Oder-Neisse frontier—it has no relevance whatever to a peace treaty with Germany as a whole and the Sudeten territories are not even affected by those ominous demands occasionally made in Germany for the 'frontiers of 1937'. During the war the Allied powers concerned made unequivocal declarations about Munich and in addition there is in existence another declaration—just as unequivocal—which Federal Chancellor Erhard made in America. But what the Czechs want now, at this very moment, is an unambiguous statement that includes every legal aspect and leaves no room and no loophole for any manner of doubt whatsoever.

There are practical grounds for this demand, and it is significant that currently it is the more progressive and unbiased elements in Czechoslovakia that are insisting so strongly on a demonstration of this kind. The 1938 Munich agreement was a severe shock for the Czech people. They felt themselves betrayed, sold out by the western powers on whom they had set their hopes and to whom they felt themselves closely bound. The national-socialist occupation that followed made them doubt that the Czech nation would ever again be able to play an independent role on the European scene. This despair of the future was one of the strongest impulses behind the communist seizure of power in 1948. It was not because pre-war social conditions

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were regarded as unacceptable that the communists enjoyed wide support—at least in the Czech provinces—but because the communists had inscribed 'orientation to the Soviets' on their banners. After what had gone before, they could present this policy as offering the only possibility of a secure national future. Between 1945 and 1948 it was difficult in Czechoslovakia to advocate orientation towards the West; the word 'Munich' would have sufficed to put such people on the defensive. Not that this attitude implied the rejection of western-type democracy. On the contrary, in the post-war period the belief was prevalent that there could very well be a sort of coexistence between western democracy and a Soviet orientation. It is now being said that in 1948 the communists did not in fact make the move to seize power on their own initiative, but had first to be vigorously encouraged by the Soviets.

THE consequences for Czechoslovakia of the 'Soviet period' which followed are well known. People talk of the 'seventeen lost years'. The country, in each and every sector, has got into a blind alley and instead of advancing is going backwards. It is no wonder then that discussion today is again concerned with the 'key year' 1947 and with the conceptions which were then current. The newly awakened Czech elite would perhaps go even further, for in the meantime the foreign policy of orientation to the Soviets has also turned out to have its drawbacks. The foreign policy favoured today would be for Czechoslovakia to act as a kind of bridge between East and West, without any special bias towards either side, but in home affairs to adopt, both in political and up to a point in economic questions also, attitudes analogous to those of a western nation—that is to say, of a country forming part of the cultural group to which Czechoslovakia feels it belongs. Perhaps in Slovakia the point of view may be somewhat different; there may exist in certain quarters there an undercurrent of calculation that it may some day be useful to have the support of the Soviets against any Czech tendencies towards centralisation.

For all that, it marks a real advance that, at any rate in the circles of the Czech progressive elite, the question of 'national orientation' has again come up for debate. But this debate—and on this point there should be no illusions—will in no circumstances solidify into concrete political conclusions, let alone actions, before Czechoslovakia's relations with the West have been clarified. Until that day dawns, the dogmatic wing of the Communist Party, which is in any case extremely powerful, will always succeed in throttling any initiative aimed at the loosening up of foreign relations. For the Czechoslovak Republic the path towards this loosening up leads through Germany. One Sunday speech by Minister Seebohm—so it is said in Prague—destroys at one blow months of patient and gradual progress towards the goal of greater realism in foreign affairs.

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In the case of Poland and the Oder-Neisse frontier, it may or may not be true that in present circumstances no gesture by the Federal Republic or its western allies would change anything at all, and would certainly bring no return. But in the case of Czechoslovakia such a result does not appear inevitable, although even here it would be a long time before favourable developments could take place. There is readiness to enter into a dialogue with the Federal Republic, and it has been noted with satisfaction that there is in West Germany today great interest in the achievements of Czech and Slovak culture. In contrast, the DDR on its part has attempted to interfere in Czech internal affairs—and this in a most tactless way, using such expressions as 'revisionism'—and has caused annoyance in Prague. Although a façade of friendship is still maintained, it has been intimated that relations with the DDR, except in economic matters, are by no means as close and fraternal as might be thought.

Today on all conceivable occasions and especially vis-à-vis the youth, Novotny and the Czech leaders of the more dogmatic wing of the party are hard put to it to defend the close alliance with the Soviet Union. They would probably find themselves in an even more difficult position were it not for the fact that they can always mobilise on behalf of themselves and their own point of view that nation-wide sensation of *Lebensangst* that is undoubtedly felt by many Czechs. On the other hand, it is significant that the same leaders have declared their readiness to normalise relations with Bonn at the very moment when Moscow is making new efforts to stiffen the ranks in eastern Europe by means of a massive propaganda campaign against the Federal Republic.

THE plan for the reform of the economy was, for many Czechs and Slovaks, an important indication of the will to independence and of a renunciation of past errors. The reforms are intended to set to rights an economy that is in a state of hopeless muddle, and to forge a weapon for the nation which would help to free it—at any rate partly—from its one-sided connections and enable it to be guided more than hitherto by its own political and economic interests. It was also believed that by way of this reform of the economy the nation had discovered an original 'path to socialism' of its own. Up to now, only fragments of the original plan have been put into operation. The recently published programme for the thirteenth party congress due to be held in May also offers little hope that the first timid measures of reform scheduled to come into force on 1 January 1966 will soon be followed by others. On the contrary, the programme declares that no definite conclusions can yet be drawn from the experiments which have so far taken place, and in the governmental decree issued last autumn no mention at all is made of the most important component of the first stage of the original reform plan, namely, a reorganisation of the pricing system. Professor Ota Sik, the 'father' of the Czech economic

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reforms, has already disclaimed responsibility for the more than modest outcome of all his efforts. Czechoslovakia must now watch how other communist countries, for instance Hungary, are drawing up far more comprehensive reform plans and above all are pursuing their aims in a much more single-minded fashion.

There are both subjective and objective reasons for the initial failure of the Czech plan for economic reform. For one thing, it did not stem from the party establishment but from academicians, who carried little weight in the power structure of the regime, and some of whom were even outsiders. It was a long, hard task to get the leadership to agree with the basic concepts of the reform plan. In 1963 Selucky was still Professor of Economics at the Technical University. When in that year he published his somewhat radical ideas, Novotny himself reacted to them by getting Selucky dismissed from his Chair. The second draft, produced by Professor Sik, was less drastic; in particular much less stress was laid on the role of market forces in the economy. Yet even this middle-of-the-road (not to say realistic) solution of the problem was too much for the party establishment to swallow. Another draft, still further restricting the scope of the reforms, was then worked out by people like Roszypal, the originator of a number of earlier plans which had foundered, and Wergner, the head of the Planning Institute. In the autumn of 1964 this draft was published in the form of a resolution submitted by the Communist Party central committee. Since then even this resolution has been watered down once again and the putting into effect of some of its most essential recommendations has been indefinitely postponed.

Undoubtedly it is the conservative elements in the central committee and in the President's entourage—the forces which oppose any and every innovation—that are to blame for this state of affairs. Nevertheless one must not lose sight of the fact that the reforms immediately met with strong waves of resistance from the lower ranks and in the meantime these have not weakened at all. In Czechoslovakia communism has, to be sure, brought considerable disadvantages to the consumer, but to make up for this it has encouraged the development of many a petty-bourgeois predisposition. No one is forced to take on big responsibilities; no one is obliged to exert himself unduly, as there is in any case very little differentiation in the level of wages and it is, to all intents and purposes, impossible to lose a job. It is not for nothing that nowadays a joke is making the rounds in Prague to the effect that socialism is still preferable to having to work.

Added to the discontent of the petty-bourgeois of the Prague suburbs, because their complacency was being shaken, was the sense of insecurity of those industrial executives and managers who owed their position more to politics than to expertise. Now the leadership of a communist party—and this is especially the case in Czechoslovakia—cannot afford in important questions publicly to oppose the lower ranks; in this respect, too, the days of Stalinism have passed. It must have

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come as a shock to the leadership of the party when, in several factories at which the new system had been experimentally introduced, the workers rebelled and in some cases even went on strike, because as a result of their low output they suddenly began to receive much lower wages than hitherto. And the effect of this was made worse when in several of these incidents, both the party and trade union organisations in the factory took sides with the workers against the director.

IN these circumstances it must be regarded as almost a triumph that at least a few measures of reform have been introduced. Prime Minister Lenart seems to deserve much of the credit for this. He rose rapidly in the post-Stalin period, until in 1963 he was appointed prime minister in place of Siroky. At present it has still not become clear whether Lenart has been able to achieve a position in Prague which would give him a decisive influence on public affairs.

Equally unsolved remains the no less important problem of Slovakian autonomy. The former autonomy of the Slovak provinces was practically abolished by the new Constitution of 1960. In 1964 it was reintroduced, albeit in a somewhat diluted form, when the Slovak regional commissars were once more given some real authority, at any rate in certain fields. There is still, as there always was, a Slovak National Council on which certain powers, particularly in cultural matters, have been conferred. The commissars (*poverenici*) are the executive agency of the National Council, but in contrast to the immediate post-war period they are no longer an independent body, a kind of cabinet. The National Council and the commissars have only rarely got the power to give directives to the administrative bodies of the three Slovak provinces, for these regional governments come under the direct authority of Prague. To make matters worse, apart from a tiny budgetary grant, the Slovak National Council has no financial means of its own. In Slovakia the government departments spend most of their time collecting statistical data about their province; these are then used in Prague, where there are several Slovak ministers and secretaries of state in the government, to support Slovak demands. Thus so-called Slovak provincial government is more of an organised Slovak lobby than anything else. The same holds good for the party organisation. Nominally, the Communist Party of Slovakia is an autonomous body, but there is no question that all the important decisions, those on Slovakia included, are taken in Prague.

No one in Slovakia is satisfied with this state of affairs, especially as it was once again expressly confirmed in the parliamentary session before last. There is, to be sure, an undercurrent of opinion among certain Slovak intellectuals that Slovak provincial autonomy should not be insisted upon too strongly. In their view, this would result only in a rapid expansion of the powers of indigenous bureaucrats and thus, in consequence of the backward state of many areas, in further obstruction to the process of liberalisation. In these circles more

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importance is attached, first, to the attainment of comprehensive cultural autonomy, and, secondly, to getting a better understanding of Slovakia's economic needs. The industrialisation of the Slovak provinces has undoubtedly made great progress under communist rule, and Slovakia has, on the whole, received a larger cut of the national budget than is due to it either by reason of its geographical extent or the size of its population. Yet for the most part what has been built is only a small number of giant complexes for the production of heavy industry goods. These have no cumulative effect and are concentrated in a few localities, so that they are unable to absorb even a sufficient proportion, let alone the whole, of the surplus Slovak labour force. A large number of Slovaks are still forced to go to the Czech provinces in search of work. This is a problem which has still to be solved.

It is only in the cultural field that Czechoslovakia has grounds for a certain measure of self-satisfaction. There, it has at least been possible to hold onto the great advances of 1963. In this regard the general situation has been very little affected either by the criticisms voiced by certain prominent leaders, and which found their way into the programmatic material of the party congress, or by the changes made at the Ministry of Culture. Nowadays the leadership seems more or less prepared to recognise the right of the intelligentsia always to be a length ahead of general developments. In view of national tradition—especially in the Czech territories—the alternative to 'dogmatism', even for the basically communist section of the intelligentsia, is not so much a 'revisionism' which would, after all, still have Marxist connotations, but rather, both ideologically and practically, the system of western democracy. In other words: as soon as the young Czech elite begins to scratch the surface of the façade of the present system of government, what comes quickly into view is not some 'archetypal Marxism' or 'pristine Leninism', but rather the figure of the universally revered Founder-President Masaryk. Perhaps this is the reason why the whole discussion about reforms in Czechoslovakia has up to now made so little progress on the question of making the political system more democratic.

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SUCCESS ON THE SCREEN

A. J. Liehm

AT the meeting of critics from a number of countries during the Second International Week of Film Criticism at Milan, a great deal was said about the crisis of the cinema, or, perhaps better, about the crises. At the same time many words of high praise were uttered about the Czechoslovak cinema, described by some—with some degree of exaggeration—as the only one actually alive (in the artistic sense) at this moment. In this atmosphere of general pessimism—somewhat exaggerated in this case, too, I think—the praise sounded a little strange, and it is no wonder that, finally, it culminated in the question put from several quarters: And when do you, as a living cinema, aim to die? How much longer do you want to last? Is it all right to count upon you next year, in two years' time?

A few days later, in Rome, an Italian friend told me about his conversation with a certain Italian producer who had been to Prague to enquire into the commercial possibilities of co-production, and had returned home genuinely alarmed. This is horrible, he said: the film industry in Czechoslovakia is in the hands of intellectuals, and that is the end, the end.

These two examples seem to me so typical and so suggestive that they can serve both as an introduction to this essay and as a test of the conclusions reached. The road to these conclusions necessarily involves a short excursion into the history of Czechoslovak cinematography. The Czech film industry is one of the oldest in Europe, and this has given it a certain advantage at every stage of its development, namely, the strength of a tradition. When the independent Czechoslovak state was re-established in 1918, there were naturally people who wished to shape the Czech cinema on the pattern of those countries with traditions stemming from a similar background, and thus the Czechoslovak film industry was built on a purely commercial basis. In the nineteen-thirties one of Europe's most modern studios was to be found in Prague, with a comparatively large production capacity which was expanded during the war when the Nazis wanted to move a considerable part of their film production to Prague and were preparing the necessary prerequisites for this by enlarging the Barrandov studios. This too was of considerable importance, for it provided a solid basis on which to work later.

The picture presented by the Czechoslovak cinema of the twenties and thirties was not unlike that of other European countries with similar facilities. Film production was a comparatively large and, on the whole, profitable mode of production of goods known as ' inexpensive entertainment for the people '; its specific traits derived from a number of influences which were, to some extent, relics of Austro-Hungarian petit-bourgeois ways of thinking, although they also sprang from

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purely Czech roots. On the fringe of the industry, however, there was a fairly weak but expressive current of film art; the names of Junghans, Rovensky and others are still vividly remembered. A certain break occurred about the middle of the thirties. At that time Prague was the real hub of Central Europe's artistic vanguard, a position strengthened by the rise of fascism and the ensuing influx of avant-garde artists from the neighbouring countries, mainly from Germany: the escape route taken by these emigrés usually went via Prague. Some representatives of the Czech and Slovak artistic vanguard, most of them adherents of the political left, began to take a greater interest in the cinema, and made a serious attempt to change its predominantly provincial, petit-bourgeois, and commercial character. These efforts, represented primarily by two great names in Czech literature, the novelist Vladislav Vancura and the poet Vitezslav Nezval, were able to rely on the practical attempts of a similar tendency then being directly encouraged within the industry itself, primarily the work of director Martin Fric and of the newcomer Otakar Vavra, who was the first to link the Czech film systematically with its literary background. It seemed that Czechoslovak cinematography was really on the threshold of a new epoch, that it was ready to attain a European standard and to contribute to the orchestra of European cinematography its own specific tone. But Munich and the occupation of Czechoslovakia came before these efforts had a proper chance to prove themselves and show results.

However, the programme had been formulated; it entered into the spirit of a whole generation, never to vanish again. And it was this programme which provided a meeting ground under the Nazi occupation for all those who had taken any part in its formulation, to work out the principles of a new organisation for the Czechoslovak cinema. They were united by the firm conviction that the film is a genuine art form, and that it was necessary to create for it such conditions as cannot be provided by an organisation which has commercial profit as its only goal and which systematically regards films as mere consumer goods, even though of a particular character. In a country where an extensive network of state-supported theatres and music had existed for a long time, this tendency, this de-commercialising of the cinema, appeared completely natural; as a matter of fact, the view was prevalent that the cinema would only be taking the next logical step, one taken much earlier by the other arts. There was therefore virtual unanimity as to principles; and immediately after the war the film industry was nationalised, in the summer of 1945, practically by the film workers themselves, with the unanimous approval of all the existing political parties from left to right.

IT seemed that, at long last, the framework existed for the materialisation of the dreams and plans of the earlier vanguard generation, which had been hard hit by Nazi terror during the occupation years. Naturally, films were being produced in Czechoslovakia during the war, and it

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must be noted that even in the conditions prevalent in those years the heritage of the late thirties had not been completely liquidated. One might indeed go so far as to say that under its influence film workers reached a decent professional standard in those years, and that some members of the younger generation got the chance to become familiar with the industry. After 1945 these people had their first opportunity for independent work. On the other hand, the occupation and everything connected with it left serious marks on the cinema as well as on many of those who had been active in it. This necessarily made it more difficult to establish and consolidate the links with the tradition embodied in the nationalised cinema's declared principles. The first signs of real creative progress and the first results did not appear until about 1947—the year when Stekly's 'Siren' had its triumph in Venice. The first fruits were seen in films made by two representatives of the pre-war generation, Martin Fric and Otakar Vavra, whose 'Silent Barricade' is now seen as the first ripple in a wave of Czech film neo-realism which unfortunately never reached shore. There was also the post-war debut of two representatives of the younger generation, Jiri Weiss (who started out on documentaries before the war and got his first experience with actors in England during the war), and Jiri Krejcik, one of those who spent the war years in apprenticeship and had their first opportunity after the war. 'The Stolen Frontier', a picture about the events of September 1938, should be given first place among Weiss' films of that period, while Krejcik is known for his intimate psychological drama 'Conscience'.

With nationalisation of the industry conditions were favourable for the work of the cartoon and puppet film studios; these were outstanding in spreading the fame of the Czech cinema in the following years. The Film Faculty of the Academy of Arts which came into existence at that time played an important role in the impressive progress of the Czech cinema. Vojtech Jasny and Karel Kachyna made use of the faculty school to create their graduation film, 'It is not always cloudy', a work of noteworthy qualities and high artistic merit which is, in its own way, the direct predecessor of everything that attracts attention in the Czechoslovak cinema today. Why then did it take more than ten years for the industry to establish links with this beginning? Why, for example, was Vojtech Jasny himself still at the age of thirty-five the person he had been, to all intents and purposes, at twenty-five?

This brings us back to the nationalisation of the industry. The liberation of the cinema from the bondage of narrow commercial interests was and is, we believe, the fundamental precondition for the enduring existence of the film as an art. It produced results in several spheres almost immediately: in the first place, in cartoon and puppet films, and to some extent in shorts and documentaries. These are the sectors which show most clearly that they cannot develop properly without decommercialisation, without acquiring a basis which eliminates anxiety about bare essentials. Otherwise they soon perish or degenerate,

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as can be demonstrated by a number of examples. On the other hand, once these conditions come into existence, the production of cartoon and puppet films takes on the characteristics of manufacture: its results are difficult to foresee in advance, and it is necessary to have full confidence in the artist, the one who makes the film. Moreover, cartoon and puppet films are made outside the sphere of exactly measurable reality, on the level of 'conventionalisation', to such an extent that they largely forbid outside intervention (usually of a preventive character). This is why artists of the calibre of Karel Zeman and, more particularly, Jiri Trnka, after the new conditions permitted them to proceed without limitations in their small workshops, were in a position to make almost immediate use of the advantages provided by nationalisation without having ever been hit by its negative aspects in the fifties. The same goes for the first post-war period in the work of the documentary and popular-science films, which shared the international laurels with the cartoon and puppet films in those years. But when their confrontation with reality—and this refers mainly to the documentaries—became the subject of sharp quarrels and debate, they showed a marked qualitative decline; only in the last few years has it been possible to mend this situation.

The antagonisms typical of the situation of the Czechoslovak cinema at the end of the forties and in the early fifties were most visible in the sphere of feature films. The creation of the material foundation is not, it must be remembered, the only condition for the existence of the film as an art. The second prerequisite, which is just as important, is to allow, within the framework of relations between the producer (in our case, the state) and the artist, enough scope for the artist's search for form, as well as for his engagement in the social as well as the personal, individual sense. But at the very moment when the cinema began to establish links with its best tradition, the tradition of the late thirties, to enunciate what it had felt in its heart ten years earlier, this scope was restricted. The reasons are known; it is sufficient to summarise them: the rigidity of the Stalinist system, the schematism and vulgarity of Zhdanov 'aesthetics'. When to this we add the psychological atmosphere which accompanied it, we can understand why there was a pause in the evolution of the Czech feature film, a new interruption which lasted, in this form, until 1955–56. The fruit did not have enough time to ripen, and more than one sprout which seemed to be on the verge of maturity withered and disappeared. A generation ready to enter the ring remained outside the ropes; there was simply not enough space for them, for new searching and new experiments (and in addition the number of films being produced was steadily declining). The generation which appeared on the scene was being crippled in various ways, without having had the opportunity to show its real strength. The best works in this period bear serious imprints of academicism, the natural outcome of such aesthetics (this is true in particular of Otakar Vavra); the rest, besides their other

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drawbacks, were no more than large-scale exercises in dilettantism, for dilettante aesthetics can lead to nothing but dilettantism. Only two names from that period still stand high today: Jiri Weiss and Jiri Krejcik, and two films, both made, of course, towards the end of that period, 'The Wolf Trap' and 'Higher Principle'. Others remaining from that generation later attempted to muster their forces for a new offensive, without, however, producing noteworthy results as yet. The Kadar-Klos duo of directors is a special case; they succeeded in both taking their first steps in that period and in living through it with honour, without losing any of their vigour in the following period, which offered much more favourable conditions to them as well as to the others.

THE change came in 1955–56. The Czechoslovak cinema sensed its opportunity and tried to grasp it. At first it did not entirely succeed. The crusty armour of old views and, more important, of old organisational forms, still had to be shattered; and five or six years more were required for this. Still, the break with the first half of the fifties was obvious to all those who were following the evolution of the cinema with any degree of attention. The first signs of genuine social engagement were becoming visible; the cramping shell of normative aestheticism was being broken; experiment and—however paradoxical this may seem—realism were achieving freedom of movement. At the same time the younger people and the newcomers felt the desire to put to a personal test the experience of the film vanguard of the twenties and thirties, to gather more confidence before continuing in their work. In this there was some danger of formalism, a danger enhanced by the high quality of the cameraman's work; this is something traditionally provided by Prague, not only in the films made here, but also in the work of men like Heller, Hackenschmied, Stallich, and others who became famous abroad. In the West, this Czech 'formalism' was misunderstood and misinterpreted, as it was in Venice in connection with Vlacil's 'Dove', or in Cannes after the screening of Uher's film debut, 'The Sun in the Net'. The critics failed to understand—maybe it was impossible for them to understand—that this stage was absolutely necessary; that it was not the Czech cinema's fault that it came later in Prague than elsewhere; but that it was simply impossible to pass it by. The critics also failed to understand that this 'formalism' was also a kind of engagement, a protest against the aestheticism of the period just ended and an effort to open the way for a new aesthetic, the aesthetic of the engaged art of today, liberated from the anathema of formalism, cosmopolitism, and similar curses.

It took five years, from 1956 to 1961, before the past was finally surmounted. In those years the Czechoslovak cinema was struggling forward to the position when it would be able at last to use its own traditions, to continue along the path marked out by the vanguard twenty-five years before, and when, to the benefit of the film as art, it could make full use of the advantages of nationalisation. It was

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re-examining the reasons for the success of Trnka, Zeman, and of the cartoons, comparing them with the road taken by the features, and arriving at the conclusion that the solution of the prolonged Barrandov crisis lay in the establishment of art workshops with maximum autonomy. The Film Faculty also reappeared at the centre of attention, and this school has become the home of discussion about problems of the contemporary cinema—let us remember the share of the faculty's rector, A. M. Brousil, in this connection—and its students have had a chance to establish contact with the world cinema, past and present, an opportunity long denied to the film public and the larger part of the technicians of the Czechoslovak industry. Making use of the favourable conditions, the students in their exercise and graduation films came through their infantile disorders, the phase of enchantment with the possibilities offered by cinematography, of infatuation with foreign examples, with its peril of eclecticism; and so, once the doors of the studios were opened to them they were ready—the older ones among them already equipped with a certain amount of experience from the documentaries, from the ' Magic Lantern ' productions, etc.—to formulate their ideas with a surprising degree of maturity.

THIS fairly detailed review of the past was necessary to show that the explosion of Czechoslovak cinematography evident in the last few years is not a coincidence; nor is it the work of a strange genius who descended all of a sudden upon Prague and Bratislava; that, instead, it is the result of a long evolution, complicated, often interrupted and derailed, which could only now reach maturity and bear fruit. These developments are specific to the Czechoslovak cinema, and it is obviously impossible to explain them by analogies, by pointing to other examples. Nevertheless, to give greater precision to the situation today, it may be advisable to make use of apparent analogies which will more clearly reveal the characteristic traits of the Czech industry.

Some ten years ago the Polish cinema began to take the film world's breath away; we would like to know more about what has happened since then. It seems to me that the contemporary Czechoslovak cinema differs from the Polish of those days on two points. In Poland we were given the work of two or three directors, one of whom, Andrzej Munk, died when he was at the height of his creative abilities. In Czechoslovakia, we are witnessing the entry into the film world of practically two generations, men who, in spite of their wide differences in age, are now being given the opportunity to realise whatever they want and in whatever way they want. The best among them—and there are at least a dozen at the highest level—can seek support both in a solid tradition and among the large numbers of cinema workers, very able on the average, with whom they work. These two generations, that of Jasny, Brynych, Kachyna, Kadar, Barabas, Vlacil, etc., on the one hand, and that of Forman, Jires, Chytilova, Nemec, Schorm, Masa, Juracek, etc., on the other, are working not as conflicting generations, but hand in

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hand, on a wide front, firmly linked by their common attitudes and by their joint efforts to rescue the Czechoslovak cinema from the witches' cauldron in which it had been tossed for so many years.

The second point of difference is the fact that the Polish film school declined at the moment when it had exhausted its great national subject. The present-day current of Czechoslovak cinematography, on the contrary, seeks nourishment in almost all cases in contemporary reality—political, intellectual, social. Some time ago Andrzej Wajda told me: 'The Polish film school was killed by its inability to establish contact with contemporary Polish reality once it had finished with the subject of the past'. This is true, although it is also true that the Polish cinema is taking great pains to establish this contact, and I do not doubt that we shall soon witness a new renaissance of the film in Warsaw and Lodz. In contrast, the Czechoslovak cinema reacts very sensitively to all impulses from without; it deals with the most recent past in the name of the most contemporary present; its problem is rather how to digest these impulses. It would be generally agreed that, whenever the best works of the Czech and Slovak cinema today have chosen subjects from the recent past, mainly from the years of the occupation and of revolution, their principal aim was to find an answer to some of the most pressing questions of the present day.

The phenomenon described by some in the West as 'the Czechoslovak film miracle' would never have materialised, of course, except for what has happened in the world cinema of the past fifteen years, whether the impulse came from Italy, the French New Wave, the independent American school, the Polish school, or Britain. Elmar Klos is right in saying that, once man has looked down from space and seen the revolving Earth, the time has passed for any purely national aesthetic. There are, of course, national subjects, and by exploiting them the artist escapes the danger of eclecticism and finds his own specific language, which is also his aesthetic contribution. This, I think, is fully valid about some of the authors of contemporary Czechoslovak film successes, in particular Forman, Chytilova, in a certain sense of Nemec, certainly Jasny, and to some extent others as well.

THIS is perhaps the point at which to try to answer the first of the questions asked at the beginning of this article: How long can you last? There is nothing more difficult than being a prophet in the world of art. However, I think I see some guarantees for the future. The first is related to the numbers, to the concentrated and simultaneous start of two artistic generations, which have formed a front broad enough to resist various temptations on one flank and possible relapses on the other. The second guarantee for the future is, I think, their link with the present, with the inexhaustible subject-matter of contemporary reality, and their firm social roots. Some of the younger generation are now getting ready to explore this reality and the experiences of

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those who lived through it in depth; this will naturally influence the shape of their future production, its form, its manner of expression.

And now to the second question, to the complaint that the Czechoslovak cinema is in the hands of intellectuals. All right, this is largely true, but then I cannot imagine any art not being in the hands of intellectuals. The very fact that creative people have achieved such a wide influence on the entire state of the contemporary Czechoslovak cinema is one of the most powerful sources of its success. But let us not pretend that we do not recognise the accompanying danger. As a matter of fact this danger is, in a sense, the main topic of our discussions. What is the problem? Not even a nationalised cinema, not even a state-owned and, in principle, non-commercial cinema, can afford to neglect or ignore the spectator and the question of profitability. In this respect our problem here does not differ essentially from the situation in the world at large. In the past twenty years we have been witnessing the division of the cinema into two distinct currents, one of which, certainly the stronger and economically more powerful, still regards the film through the eyes of its producers of half a century ago and sees it as the big entertainment industry for the masses, who do not care how and by what they amuse themselves. Three years ago a Mexican film director said at Acapulco: 'In the twentieth century the film has taken the place of the circus.' It could be added, in view of the means and possibilities at its disposal, a monster-circus. On the other hand, there is the current of film art, an art with all the attributes this word has on all its levels and in all its senses. There is nothing strange about this separation; differentiation and division are the consequence and the certificate of maturity, and, in our times, the film has become ripe for this differentiation. Up to this point, everything seems to be all right. In other arts, in literature, music, the theatre, the graphic arts, etc., a similar process has been at work. But, in view of the industrial and commercial aspect of film producing, the distribution of films, which is becoming an ever more important factor in their production, has failed to take note of this tendency, and in a number of countries film art is gradually becoming its victim. This is by no means limited to the West, although a nationalised cinema, if correctly understood and sensibly organised, can protect the art against undue pressure by the distributors. This can be done, however, only to a certain extent, because even nationalised distribution has its own logic, its own financial interests, and its own ideas about the films it thinks most fit for presentation to the public. The solution to this problem does not lie in forcing those ill-fated intellectuals now in charge of the cinema to do away with films which aim only to amuse, while reserving cinematography as a whole for art with a capital A. Composers and instrumentalists concerned with serious music have never aimed at assuming absolute control and eliminating music designed to amuse, beginning with jazz and ending with brass bands. The solution lies in establishing a proper balance between the two currents in production,

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while modifying the distribution system in a way which distinguishes between the distribution of film art and that of film entertainment. This problem is still to be solved in Czechoslovakia; it is on the agenda, and the men who stand in the forefront of the new directions are the very ones to call for a new arrangement, realising that they would be jeopardising their own work if they disregarded this problem. On the other hand, it is naturally just as necessary to preserve differentiation and balance. The makers of good entertainment films are now attempting, under the influence of our film vanguard, to ' make art '. The result is bad art and no entertainment. Amusement is nothing to be ashamed of. This irregular situation must be mended, and that is the second task now facing us. I would only like to add that, naturally, the line of division between the two currents can be crossed; there are many artists—again, not only in the cinema—who at different stages of their creative development (I have no strong belief in playing the role of vanguard for life) find a way to the masses without abandoning their artistic standards. And, finally, it seems to me that the differentiation among viewers, as applied in television, whether we like it or not (and I personally rather like it), as well as technical progress in projection, distribution, etc., will influence the solution of all these problems with which we are all now confronted.

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CURRENT TRENDS IN PAINTING

Jiri Padrta

THE western world knows little of the cultural problems and artistic trends in eastern Europe. For the great majority of the English, French and Americans, it is a blank spot on the cultural map of the world. This is unfortunate. Fifteen years ago ideological barriers restricted the exchange between East and West to a minimum, and although the situation has now changed greatly for the better, it is still not satisfactory. The picture of cultural events in the countries of eastern Europe given to their readers and listeners by the western press, radio, and television is for the most part a caricature. Czechoslovakia is no exception, even though its borders are contiguous with two western countries—and despite the fact that it is wide open for foreign tourists and therefore there is every opportunity to examine the cultural scene there. Together with contemporary Czech literature, which suffers from the handicaps of translation and publishing difficulties, art is in this respect in the worst position.

For many art critics and journalists contemporary Czech painting is still drowned in the waters of descriptive naturalism and propaganda typical of the Stalin era. But in fact in all the large cities of Czechoslovakia, in Prague, Brno, and Bratislava, there has been a rapid and dynamic development in art during the past ten years, and it is now up to the standards of the developed countries of modern Europe. It is also a fact that all the galleries here, large and small, are quite freely exhibiting many different varieties of abstract art, pop art, and the new figurative art, and even include geometric and kinetic art. Yet in London, Paris, and New York, hardly anyone has noted these facts. The purpose of this note is not only to call attention to them but also to indicate briefly the scope of these activities and their character. Because of limited space, we will consider Czech art only, but not Slovak art, which, though directly connected with it, has some quite specific features of its own.

One key for analysing Czech art is tradition, which is especially important in Bohemia. I mean the continuous tradition of modern art which is one of the most remarkable and most coherent in all central Europe. Even before the 1914–18 war there was a large school of expressionist and cubist painters, sculptors, and architects in Prague who, in an original way, modified and adapted the new plastic styles then characteristic of the Parisian school. The contributions of this Czech founding generation have after fifty years just been reinstated, with the exposition of Czech art at the Paris Museum of Modern Art. The cultural environment in which these artists lived half a century ago had a direct and dynamic continuity up to the 1950s. There were roughly three generations of artists who, successively, played their

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part in assimilating the great international ideas in art, starting with the new objectivism, imaginative realism, and new classicism in the twenties, and then with late cubism and expressionism, not to mention abstract painting and surrealism, which had one of its strongholds in Prague, and were directly connected with the activities of Breton's group in Paris. The second world war, with the isolation of the occupation years, stamped this tradition with certain specific local features, but basically it did not disrupt it in any way. On the contrary, until the early 1950s there were sharply differentiated art currents in Prague, Brno, and Bratislava, embracing within them specific and often original reactions to the problems of late surrealism, of the so-called 'second wave' of imaginative painting and of a new poetic, down-to-earth realism, not to mention the problems of plasticity being tackled by the youngest war generation of the Parisian school.

It was the 1950s and the 'personality cult' which had a deforming influence on these developments. They gave birth to an academic naturalism which stamped official art with the standardised, uniform character of a vulgarly interpreted socialist realism. This distortion was only temporary, however. A reaction had already built up during the later 1950s. In the work of several artists we can detect the gradual abandonment of the narrow concept of the social function of art, which had for a time been schematically linked to the mechanisms of ideology and political activity. A priori aesthetic standards and normative critical judgments which had hampered so much of Czechoslovak art on the plane of idea and form were gradually pushed aside by vital, creative work. At the same time the rehabilitation of past traditions in local and world art, from cubism and expressionism to surrealism and the beginnings of abstract art, played its part. The well-publicised historical and critical preparation and documentation of the retrospective exhibitions held in Prague, Brno, and Bratislava served as a stimulus for many artists. They helped the older generation to regain the continuity in their work which had been disrupted. For one whole segment of young artists who graduated from art school at the beginning of the 1950s, they were really basic art lessons, directly guiding their first independent steps. A reiteration of the basic principles of cubism, expressionism, and surrealism helped many of these people, now in their thirties, to come to grips with the vital problems of contemporary art at the end of the 1950s. To this revived awareness of tradition there was added a gradual broadening of sources of information about current developments in art throughout the world. During the late 1950s and early 1960s, this assimilation and emancipation reached a stage at which the whole panorama of art in Czechoslovakia once more represented a highly differentiated whole, quite unlike the uniformity of ten years earlier. Several distinctive figures stand out, mostly of the middle generation, under 50 years of age. Their work has an individuality of its own, although many of them take the work

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of older artists as their model, men who, during the 1950s, had maintained the continuity of artistic expression and had succeeded in giving it a qualitatively new and modern character—

THIS is of course but a bare general outline of what happened in fifteen years of creative and critical conflict. Dozens of artists, theoreticians, and critics took part in the debate, which went on in studios in Prague and in the provinces, and in galleries, and was echoed by the public and in the press, and sometimes in ideological institutions. The outcome is the present reinstatement of the concept of modern Czech painting in terms of past tradition and of today. Its content now differs in no way from the art of any advanced country. Of course, it has its gains and losses, its moments of progress and of backsliding. It also has, I think, some specific tendencies and characteristics, particularly in the special illumination of certain ideas expressed by some contemporary Czech artists. For many artists, the first practical step was to discard the retrograde, petrified ideas of a too-narrowly-limited socialist realism and *plein airism*; later the revival of expressionism and cubism was combined with an individual study of the new possibilities of expression and vision opened in world art after the war. The outcome of these studies varied. The problem of form and idea in the various versions of abstract art, which began to have a distinct influence on some individual painters and groups at the turn of the 1950s, left a heritage for contemporary Czech painting which is very similar to that which most artists in other parts of the world are working with. There have been positive results but negative ones too. Among the first is the fact that it made it possible for some artists to emancipate themselves on a qualitatively new level of modern artistic expression. One negative effect has been the spread of an abstract academicism and mannerism of a new kind which can be seen today at exhibitions in Prague, Brno, and Bratislava just as often as in Munich, Paris, or London.

All this, however, against a particular background. These influences penetrated Czechoslovak painting quite late, at a time when elsewhere they had passed their peak, and when a more and more obvious reaction had set in. This explains why Czechoslovak painting, with a few minor exceptions, was not affected by the post-war wave of abstract expressionism and non-formal action painting. This is especially surprising since expressionism had a particularly strong tradition here. One reason, of course, is the orientation of some of the middle and older generation of painters, who throughout the 1950s maintained continuity of style and turned to non-figurative painting from quite different premises from those of painters like Mathieu, Pollock, or Fautrier. Some of them got there from wartime surrealism, which was still making itself felt in their work until the beginning of the 1950s, and was later gradually transformed in very different individual versions into abstract surrealism, and, in the broadest sense, into non-objective

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painting with an imaginative base. Others developed a certain modification of late cubism and expressionism which both in content and in form was related to the work of some wartime groups. The result was a formal abstractionism of various kinds. One approached the example of the Paris school of the Manessier, Esteve, or Bozain type, while another used non-objective symbols and expressive calligraphy. Understandably, they had an effect on those around them. This is especially true of the trends which have a surrealist origin and which, through the influence of several distinguished painters as well as of some of the youngest Czech critics, have found wide acceptance among young painters.

They include Josef Istler, Mikulas Medek, Zdenek Sklenar, and Vaclav Tikal. Despite all differences of expression and style, they were brought together during the 1940s by the idea of the artistic objectification of fantasy, using the method of irrational relationships and dream associations. Characteristic of Istler and Tikal is their interest in hallucinations and traumatic moments of vision, conditioned by the psychosis of war and interpreted with the literary colouring typical of a large part of the surrealist painters of the so-called 'second wave'. Medek's painting was similarly inspired by obsessive ideas about some kind of drastic dream anatomy carefully painted in verist form. The lyric world of Zdenek Sklenar had an artificial flavour of bizarre romanticism, in the tradition of Arcimbold's '*concetti*' and Max Ernst's collages.

This, of course, was twenty years ago. Today we find only faint reminders of that second phase of surrealism whose world-wide coherence was fundamentally disrupted by war. Later, with one exception, these artists developed along different lines. Vaclav Tikal gradually broke away completely from the original doctrine of surrealist aesthetics; although influenced by abstract painting during the later 1950s, his work today still has the same contact with ideas which continue to distinguish the heritage of late surrealism. His latest paintings represent a kind of imagination which is quite close to that of Robert Mattoni, for instance. Sklenar's path continues to remain a completely solitary one. During the 1950s he found a source of inspiration in archaic Chinese painting and calligraphy. Today he paraphrases the iconographic elements with great taste and a sense of poetic values in purely individual transpositions; his painting moves along the dividing-line between the figurative and the abstract, combining the subtle effects of a material and pictorial structure with original symbols and ornamental calligraphy.

These new impulses, created by surrealism for part of the wartime generation, have mingled with the local atmosphere and gradually some have changed into an almost complete antithesis of the original doctrine. This is especially true of the paintings which fused the surrealist and the abstract, a fusion which occurred during the war and post-war years in Europe, and appeared most markedly on the American

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continent. In a certain sense, the Czechoslovak protagonists were Mikulas Medek and Josef Istler, who came to abstract painting in the 1950s.

Medek grew in the 1950s from a one-time surrealist outsider to a genuine figure in the world of art. The surrealistic dream projection which had up to then worked on the imaginative recreation of real shapes was gradually replaced in his painting by the direct recording of psychic events—a description of 'internal events' which takes the shape of non-figurative forms. Biological, physiological, and psychic activities such as nerve impulses, energy changes, and the happenings within the body which express themselves in feelings of pain, passion, joy, and tenderness—these have the unique constitutive value for Medek of symbolic events irrevocably determining human destiny. Hence the characteristic titles of some of his paintings—'Sensitive Manifestation', 'A Small Event on the Edge of 24,000 c^2 of Pink Tenderness', etc. Medek wants to engage and enlist all the elements of the individual soul. To look at his pictures is to participate in his conflict with the material of the picture, which is pierced, wrinkled, and wounded with perforations and gashes. At the same time they are organised by a stern formative will; they express a deep, vital energy, but the reflexes are guided. The result is a picture in which all the ideas and formal planes are integrated into a clearly defined aesthetic unit to which Medek's personal mythology usually gives a certain characteristic baroque colouring, something akin to what Michel Tapié not long ago called 'Baroque Ensemblisme'. To Josef Istler a picture is a meaningful structure connected with the formation of organic individual material, of affective events, associations, memories, all shaped in the area of the imagination. The latent connection with the surrealist past can be seen in the artificial, mannered type of his imagination. The images he uses most probably represent suggestions originating in certain biological activities and in the physical universe; they give the impression of imaginary incisions through biological microstructures, of nerve pulsations as well as the penetration of galactic formations.

THERE is thus great diversity in the work of Czech painters today, although they can be grouped into a few characteristic tendencies. However modified in each case, they have a common interest in affective events and in the imaginative and poetic moments of vision objectivised on various symbolical levels. This is especially true of Group D, formed five years ago, which, after presenting its work in private ateliers, first appeared publicly in Prague in 1963. The group consists of Medek and Istler and a number of other painters and sculptors whose work and attitudes range roughly from the abstract with certain remnants of surrealism, to the neo-baroque. Though stemming from the surrealist tradition, their work, with its marked baroque colouring, links them closely with the spiritual undercurrents of life in central Europe today. Its characteristic coherence has its

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origins in the aspiration to collective coherence represented by Group D, and also in the theoretical activities of some young critics. There are, of course, wide differences of opinion and naturally differences in quality. The less well-informed observers, especially among foreign visitors to Prague ateliers and exhibitions, do not as a rule have the opportunity to study these differences or to compare them with other progressive tendencies in contemporary Czech painting; hence there is a good deal of partial and even distorted comments on their work in western reviews.

Besides the Group D circle there are other tendencies with a substantially different orientation. One of them is represented by the work of Jan Kotik, another painter of the middle generation. Its origins are to be found in 'group 42', which during the war and occupation maintained the continuity of the traditions of modern art. When the group broke up in 1948, Kotik pursued his own solitary way, which gradually took a new direction showing the influence of Paul Klee and the expressionists. Kotik tried to solve the problems inherent in a new and individual concept of space as a surface power field materialising plastic visions. By the end of the fifties he had discarded all illustrative conceptions and from then on painted only abstract pictures. Their strongly expressive character reveals his personal reaction to the climate of European painting of that time, including abstract expressionism, informal picture writing, non-objective graphics, etc. The vitality and elemental nature of his way of painting is not, however, identical with the 'informal' technique. On the contrary, it reflects and is controlled by formative thought. Kotik conceives of a picture as the point of intersection of psychic and physical activities and, at the same time, of a complex of realities with varying meaning. A severely flat space is organised geometrically, divided into fields and coloured sections in which a sensitive painter's notes are inscribed—perhaps by chaotic spontaneous graphs or pictographs in the form of nameless things and shapes, perhaps by carefully drawn letters hinting at illustration, or, in some pictures, by non-objective action painting. Kotik's counters, song books, and stock books of things came into being—paintings evoking a series of both material and emotional associations arranged by the simultaneous juxtaposition of a series of references, impulses, and shocks. These are pictures which tell a story of mysterious and chaotic happenings. The artist sees a picture as presenting several areas of meanings located on a given divided surface, and this brought Kotik to a realistic opening of a surface into the surrounding empty space. In his most recent paintings the format is broken through into relief planes, so that two and sometimes even more pictorial conglomerates are put together. At other times the surface of the canvas is curved into forms of spherical geometry, and the painting ceases to exist on an ideal plane given in advance and becomes a real movement in a real space. This not only reflects a radical change in the character of the artist's

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vision, but also gives the basic determinants of its objectification, corresponding to a new version of narrative art.

Another solitary figure deserving detailed treatment is Jiri Kolar, an artist who originally was a poet, writer, and dramatist. The experimental character of his work, which includes several still unpublished collections of poems, plays, and translations (Kolar was the first to translate Ionesco and Beckett into Czech), led him finally to the field of visual poetry in which the greater part of his creation moves. His work includes several cycles of typographs, graphic and emblematic poems in which abstract picture geometry is combined with unobjective typewritten writing. At other times his poetic vision is expressed by a free abstract graph, chaotic handwriting, and pictograph, and a strange effect is produced by cutting through, piercing, tearing, and burning the canvas. He also uses the technique of assemblage and the poetry of objects taken over from the tradition of Dada and surrealism. He uses it, of course, in an entirely different spirit, 'evidential poetry' of which he is the creator. Small objects and substances of varying textures are assembled into 'verses' and 'strophes' of a poem; they have the surrealistic character of fetishes and cohere into the meaningful structure of a non-objective poem through a straightforward reference to its origin and meaning. Technically, this kind of poetry is related to surrealist *poème-objets*; aesthetically, however, it is more closely related to the work of Kurt Schwitters. In its consistent anti-romanticism and in certain elements of urban folklore, it is also connected with the recent manifestations of neo-Dada. The third and most voluminous variety of Jiri Kolar's visual poetry is tied up with the technique of collage. Even here he has worked out an entirely new individual version of this type of art, based on an aesthetic evaluation of the non-poetic materials offered to an artist by modern civilisation, such as pieces of texts from textbooks, dictionaries, railroad time-tables, statistics, diagrams, music scores, letters, and illustrations from magazines. Kolar prepares them carefully by tearing and cutting, and shapes them according to the principles of non-objective pictorial geometry. His collages become a sort of formal picture abstraction while retaining the character of visual poems which make their impression by fractions of distorted words and pictorial notes, and represent poetic mechanisms constructed from catalogue words, letters, illustrations, slogans, and statistics. The assemblage of these fractional inventories thus becomes a material and finally a form of a new visual plastic language.

Clearly, Jiri Kolar's work is animated by an immensely rich invention and imagination; the artist places himself on the border between creative art and poetry, establishing relations between writing and picture. This marks him as representing in this respect so-called 'lettrisme', which makes use of writing and letters as pictorial, plastic, and compository elements, and as free graphics and calligraphy. It is a style used at the present time by a number of Czech painters and poets,

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among them Edward Ovacek, who puts together abstract compositions and objects with symbolical titles from different type-founts; and Milos Urbasek, who combines in his pictures and collages letters and expressionistic action painting. There is also Jan Kubicek, whose geometric letter pictures show kinship with the so-called New Abstractionism; and Jiri Balcar, the writer of ironically absurd 'Decrees' inspired by modern bureaucracy with its unending statistics, formulas, and printed forms. In some cases the activity of these scriptural painters closely touches the poetry now being produced in Czechoslovakia by an entire school of poets.

INCREASINGLY influential since the beginning of the sixties is the school of geometric abstraction, concrete and op art. It follows closely the tradition of the Czech painter Frantisek Kupka, who lived in Paris, and shows the influence of Russian constructivism. Its outstanding representatives are Zdenek Sykora and Karel Malich. The first arrived at the idea of variable coloured and plastic structures, conceived on the basis of numerical combinations programmed by electronic computers. This gives optical kinetic coloured and plastic effects which are usually included in the international frame of op art. Malich, on the other hand, creates geometrical and mathematical reliefs which in part hark back to the tradition of constructivism and neo-plasticism. The impersonal nature of these configurations of geometric components is modified and coloured by the reflective response of the painter.

The assimilation of impulses from outside to a distinct home tradition and local temper is shown clearly in the work of Czech painters practising pop art. The work of Robert Rauschenberg and of some other Americans has had a marked effect in the last two years and it cannot be said that it was always a happy one. Rauschenberg's technique, combining painting with collage, serigraphs, and odd materials, is used in Prague with varied success. This is true of Jiri Hejna, who produces grotesque painted objects and assemblages, and applies in lesser degree to Richard Fremund, whose sensual talent and eye for colour this method does not suit; least of all does it apply to Theodor Rotrekl, who is trying to put ideology into pop art and whose picture-objects quite often slip into decorative art and publicity.

The designer, painter, and writer Adolf Hoffmeister has produced some very original collages, drawings, and illustrations, while Frantisek Gross concentrates in his work on the day-to-day life of cities. The interest in urban folklore, typical of contemporary pop art, has a somewhat different accent in Czechoslovakia from what it has in America—it is more lyric, more romantic, and more literary.

The painters we have discussed so far belong roughly to two generations (the young generation 30–40 years old, and the middle generation 40–50 years old). Of course, they are not the only representatives of their generations. There are also a considerable number of other artists who follow other and quite different ideas, varying from different types

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of abstract painting, considered now as classic, to various versions of figurative art. Among them, let me mention at least Frantisek Jiroudek, whose compositions can be placed successfully within the frame of the so-called new figuration, and Karel Soucek, with his large compositions on urban themes.

Let me mention briefly some members of a large group of painters, bound by a common fate, who left the Prague art schools in the early fifties and who went through ten years of repetition of the classic forms of cubism, fauvism, and expressionism, a manifestation of their opposition to the officially supported academic naturalism. To rehabilitate these classic traditions of modern art the first collective exhibitions of their work were given in Prague during the late fifties. They had taken symbolical names such as May, Trace, 12 o'clock Shift. They found creative contact with the contemporary world and its painters' language at the end of the decade, and today some of their work is of an exceptionally high standard, capable of serious comparison even on an international level. This refers for instance to Jiri John, a painter of lyric nature visions who in many respects is very close to the art of Max Ernst, but at the same time to a Czech tradition of poetic painting of the kind represented by Josef Sima, a Czech who lives in Paris. The newest generation of painters, under the age of thirty, are mostly struggling with numerous types of new abstract mannerism and are taking over various formal and technical painting procedures. This refers especially to neo-baroque structural painting and to the surrealist tendencies introduced by the older representatives of Group D. Some of the youngest painters, however, seem compelled to react against technical virtuosity and against the predominance of romantic subjectivity. They turn their interest and attention to aesthetics of neo-Dada, new reality, pop art, new figuration, and also to geometric and kinetic art. They use the technique of assemblage, collage, of mounted objects. Their work is still immature, sometimes naïve, but just the same it is symptomatic, pointing in new directions.

WANTED—Any documents, letters, information, etc. concerning the disappearance of Raoul Wallenberg. Write to: Dr. A. L., c/o *Survey*, 1 Langham Place, W.1.

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TELEVISION LIGHTS AND SHADOWS

Jiri Lederer

IT would be useless to draw a detailed picture of the development of television in Czechoslovakia, where regular transmissions started on 1 May 1953. It is, to a large extent, similar to that in other countries. There was a good deal of improvisation in arduous conditions of space, material, and personnel. And the viewers also had their difficulties, as for many years there was an acute shortage of television sets on the market. This too is part of the history of Czechoslovak Television, which now broadcasts some 60 hours a day.

Programmes are produced by the studios in Prague, Bratislava, Ostrava, Brno, and Kosice, and are broadcast daily in the morning, afternoon, and at night. There are now over two million homes with TV sets, and a sufficient number, both of home and foreign production, on sale, the majority of which may be purchased by instalments.

Television was for some years part of Czechoslovak Radio; later both institutions came under a joint State Committee for Radio and Television. Since 1959 the two work side by side as completely independent bodies: Czechoslovak Radio and Czechoslovak Television. The partition was completed in 1965 by the division of the programme journal into two separate weeklies. This state of separation, though rare in Europe, is not likely to be changed in the near future, since neither side feels the need for joint organisation. The need for co-ordinated collaboration is felt, and energetic efforts have recently been made to attain it.

As far as material conditions go, Czechoslovak Television is suffering from inadequate production space and technical equipment. This is fully and critically appreciated by senior officials of both the party and the government. This is largely the reason why there is still only one TV programme on the air, and why the start of a second programme had to be postponed. The need for a second programme is fully recognised, because it would make possible a more discriminating differentiation in the kind of programme offered.

Before going into detail about the successes and the problems of programming, I should like to suggest that the TV studios in Czechoslovakia have developed a quite remarkable specific profile—each studio concentrating on a certain field where it is able to make the maximum contribution to the national programme. The Bratislava studio has worked out a dramaturgic line by compiling a bold and searching repertoire of world drama; it has frequently put on the Czechoslovak première of an important work, written either for the stage or specifically for television. Outstandingly impressive performances were given in 1963 and 1964. The Ostrava studio has concentrated in particular on

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the so-called publicistic genres, different types of reportage and features dealing almost exclusively with the life of the Ostrava region. The studio in Brno became very popular with viewers by its round-table programme called 'May I Take Part in the Discussion?' This live broadcast stimulates discussion between the public and responsible officials concerned in various fields of social and intellectual life. It is difficult to describe the activities of the Kosice studio, as it concentrates almost entirely on regional subjects, and its programmes get on to the national network only very seldom. I have deliberately omitted the Prague studio. Since it is the most powerful in every respect—in equipment, the number of its staff, the extent and variety of programme production—it will be best to deal with it later in the framework of a summary survey of Czechoslovak TV as a whole.

This differentiation which has grown up makes a positive contribution to the programme composition and the collaboration of the studios. At first each studio tried to become universal, to be a miniature Prague. But Prague, as the central studio, is able to produce a wide range of both publicistic and artistic programmes. The capital offers not only television itself, but wide possibilities over the entire range of cultural life, which can be called on for the TV programme; this is not the case in the regional television centres.

Bratislava—the administrative and cultural centre of the other part of our Republic, Slovakia—is in this respect not unlike Prague, but the studio there concentrates on a very distinct field of activities. It has assembled a group of excellent actors and maintains high artistic standards in its drama productions.

Ostrava—the industrial centre of Northern Moravia—has created an interesting type of economic reportage which, combining film shots and studio narration, gives serious surveys of many social problems, and particularly of economic questions. Another successful series are the panels under the heading of 'Twilight Hour'. These panels consist of four or five experts in various fields such as hunting, tourism, detective stories, etc., and have become notable for their atmosphere of ease and good humour.

Brno—an important commercial and cultural centre—leads in public discussion, but it has not yet exploited the possibilities offered by a number of good cabarets which are popular all over the country; they appear on the little screen too rarely.

This distribution of activities between the various TV studios appears sound and useful, and in harmony with the situation in the country and its daily life. This of course does not mean that one or other studio would not be allowed to concentrate on something else; in fact they do. But the present distribution of work has helped to give each studio firm ground under its feet, strengthened its self-reliance; it meets the test of success, and has played a positive part in this stage of development of Czechoslovak Television.

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IN attempting a critique of the last few years in Czechoslovak TV it is not always easy to keep a fair balance between the response of the public and the writer's own views. But it would probably be generally agreed that artistic programmes have the lead over information and public affairs. Of course, programmes do not develop along smooth and balanced lines. Many of TV's activities are under severe criticism at home from both viewers and reviewers; on the other hand, Czechoslovak Television has in recent years won important prizes at international festivals with its own films. At the Montreux festival several high-ranking awards were given to the entertaining musical film 'A Thousand Glances Behind the Stage', 'The Lost Revue' (which got First Prize at the festival in Alexandria), and the musical revue 'Silence, Silence, Silence' (a First Prize in Alexandria as well). At the Monte Carlo festival Czechoslovak Television had an outstanding success with 'Courtship', based on a Chekhov story, which was awarded the prize for the best comedy; Jan Werich won the award for the best acting (in the film 'The Bear', also based on Chekhov); at Monte Carlo, too, Czechoslovak Television won the critics' award for the best group film entries to the festival; the picture for children, 'The Good Mr Barnabasek' was awarded a prize, too. It is, then, particularly in the fields of revue and comedy that Czechoslovak Television has gained a world reputation. This response from abroad is in harmony with the voices of the television critics and viewers at home. Television film production is the most successful undertaking of the artistic programming of Czechoslovak Television. The artistic staff—literary advisers, producers, directors, cameramen—come from the TV studios, while the technical equipment and film studios are borrowed or hired from the State Film Studios.

There are other successful undertakings. From the point of view of social response, two series of broadcasts by Czechoslovak Television during the twelve years of its existence have been most successful. One, run as a quiz contest for many years up to 1961, was called 'Answer Ten Times'. Since then no similar competition programme has been so successful although there have been a number of experiments. The basic idea of the series came actually from abroad, but its arrangement was typically Czechoslovak. The quiz contest was run for ten consecutive rounds, each covering a different field—sport, archaeology, the theatre, economics, history of the labour movement, etc., etc. The viewer learnt a lot, and at the same time shared the drama of those being questioned, a drama mercilessly revealed by the television camera. I thought it a mistake to cancel that series, and I frequently published this opinion. I felt that it still had a high potential.

The second big success was a dramatic series under the title 'Three Fellows in One Cottage'. It ran for a year and a half, finishing in the spring of 1963. Originally it had been intended to run for a year only, but was given a further six instalments in response to public demand. Once a month viewers met three villagers—the grandfather, the father

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(chairman of a local agricultural co-operative), and his son, and they were always anxious to learn what their popular heroes were to live through and how they would act. In particular they were curious to learn their views and thoughts, which were always strongly political and topical. The series, a political forum in dramatic form, helped to improve the atmosphere of our society. But since it was amusing, and given by excellent actors, the series was also highly effective artistically.

Nevertheless, the genuine television play remains a problem. In one year some ten pieces appear, written mostly by playwrights who are just starting out. But even if the year 1965 may not have been extraordinary for the number of such plays (because television drama still consists largely of stage productions and adaptations of books), there have been several remarkable works by these young authors, who evidently realised the power of television to communicate and its capacity to present serious moral and social problems in terms of the intimate drama.

Until now we have not succeeded in completely meeting the demand for original television plays although a number of competitions have been organised. Many writers believe that the fees are a serious obstacle to the original television play; they compare badly with those paid for a film scenario and are even lower than the rates for a radio play.

In the field of information and public affairs, where many successes have been marked up, there are still a number of problems. The editorial team of 'The Curious Camera' works systematically and with the greatest competence. It is addressed mainly to young viewers and has highly qualified and inventive reporters who choose subjects that are both interesting and serious, and do their best to present them in an attractive manner. Their topics are most varied. For example, the team reported on the discovery of remarkable documents submerged by the Germans in the lakes of the Bohemian Forest at the end of the last war. They also presented a report and discussion on the fate of emigrés who left our Republic. This programme met a lively response from the viewers, and the question was made the subject of another round-table discussion, in which experts and officials of the Ministry of the Interior took part. The Curious Camera team also made a report on Gagarin, produced in the 'City of Astronauts' in the Soviet Union.

What is lacking is on-the-spot reportage to tell the viewer what has happened and is happening, and to do this in a witty and solid manner. Virtually the only live transmissions are those dealing with sports and important political events; all other fields of daily life are left untouched by live reports. This state of affairs is certainly due in part to the unsatisfactory technical equipment, cameras, and recording apparatus. But Czechoslovak Television will reach maturity only when it is able to provide its viewers with lively and prompt reporting of the news and current happenings.

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TELEVISION broadcasting in Czechoslovakia should not be looked at in isolation from the very animated cultural life of the country generally in the past few years. This is something which has steadily raised our standards for judging TV programmes. These programmes are regularly evaluated and criticised by some ten professional critics who form the Club of Television Critics within the Association of Czechoslovak Journalists. Their critiques appear in the leading dailies, weeklies, and monthly magazines. There is no professional periodical in Czechoslovakia devoted to the systematic treatment of television programming, which is a matter for regret among both critics and television staff. As for books on TV in Czechoslovakia (apart from those dealing with its engineering aspects), they can be counted on the fingers of one hand. And even these only sum up past experience and provide information; analysis hardly finds a place.

As elsewhere, so in Czechoslovakia, the question of the attitude of different sections of the viewing public towards the televised programmes is a burning one. Audience research and research into the impact of television programmes are still in their very earliest days.

It is generally accepted that for a responsible evaluation letters do not provide a reliable basis; it is necessary to conduct continuing sociological research as the foundation for improving programme planning and production. Hitherto our knowledge has been all too scanty and patchy, and it has been difficult to draw firm conclusions. As it is, however, we have for the time being to use odd scraps of information.

According to a partial audience research enquiry carried out in 1962, it is in the age group of 25 to 40 that most time is devoted to viewing. Viewing is a family affair; the average number of viewers in front of a set is estimated at 3–5, and the average viewer watches television 2–3 hours a day. Half of the people interviewed view ' when they have time to do so ', 40 per cent ' select their programmes '. There is greatest interest in television on Saturday and Sunday evening, and so Czechoslovak TV devotes its best efforts to the programmes broadcast at those times, though so far without notable success.

The most successful programmes, according to the results of this enquiry, are: (1) cinema films (over 80 per cent of the viewers), (2) the Saturday commentary on international affairs (75 per cent), (3) entertainment programmes (almost 70 per cent), (4) drama productions (around 60 per cent), (5) TV news (around 55 per cent), (6) sports events (over 50 per cent).

There is only a small audience for televised opera. The governing board of Czechoslovak Television some years ago drew from this the fatal conclusion that it was altogether unwanted and cancelled opera transmissions. Later they reconsidered the matter and decided that television should not be so highly rated as a mass medium as to exclude from the programme items which do not get a mass response. If only

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2 per cent of all the screens were lighted up during an opera transmission, this would mean 40,000 sets, or a total of roughly 150,000 viewers. Is it not worth while broadcasting an opera for 150,000 viewers? How many theatre performances would be needed to satisfy such an audience? These figures are, of course, only approximate estimates; comprehensive research, still to be carried out, is needed for a more accurate picture.

The general television public reacts sensitively to everything they see on the little screen, itself an index to the importance of this medium in public life. The government are fully aware of this and make their decisions accordingly. Several years ago it was decided that Czechoslovak Television needed really up-to-date working conditions. The construction of a more modern Television Centre was decided on, and work is now going rapidly ahead.

It is clear from what has been said here that a lot of solid work has been done by the talented and diligent staff of Czechoslovak Television, and that this was achieved under difficult conditions. Everybody is waiting for the completion of the new TV Centre. Everybody is waiting for thorough sociological audience research. Everybody is waiting for the publication of specialised professional literature to help in the training of the creative television staff. When these conditions have been met, a still more substantial improvement in our television programmes is to be expected.

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KAFKA AS PHILOSOPHER

Ivan Svitak

KAFKA'S literary work lends itself to aesthetic, sociological, psychological, and perhaps even theological interpretations. But the totality of Kafka's personality emerges only after one has gone beyond all these manifestations of his persona and has penetrated to the essential, the philosopher Kafka. This, the deepest layer of his intellectual legacy, reveals not only the particular and passing aspects of twentieth-century life, but succeeds in illuminating something of the basic structures underlying all human existence and experience. We come face to face with the complete, the whole Kafka, only if we regard him as an anthropological philosopher whose writings are a relevant enquiry into the nature of the human condition. Only when the philosophy informing all his writings is fully understood is it possible to savour Kafka's artistry, psychological insight, and social relevance. If this has not been more widely appreciated, it is because Kafka's formal perfection, his compelling presentation of contemporary problems, and the brilliance and perceptiveness of his understanding, have so dazzled the reader that he has left it to the academic expert to trace these imposing, far-spreading branches down to their common roots.

The open-ended philosophy underlying Kafka's work relates to states of human awareness and bears little resemblance to any rigid philosophical doctrine. Concerned with modes of actually experienced existence, it does not fit any closed conceptual system. It is a small bud on the self-same tree of human knowledge which, rooted in the Socratic demand for self-understanding, also brought stoicism to fruition. To dub Kafka an existentialist is, therefore, almost meaningless, since to a certain extent all philosophy is a variation on the theme of the human predicament. Moreover, such a classification is based on a popular misconception, which overlooks the fact that existentialism, but for certain shared convictions, represents widely divergent political, philosophical, moral, and religious views. Kafka cannot be fully understood from any position based on a self-contained philosophical doctrine. For his view that man's individual existence precedes his generic essence precludes from the very outset the construction of elaborate metaphysical systems.

Kafka is a philosophic poet. His writings, like those of Proust and Joyce, are really vast symphonic poems, even though his poetry lacks the specific musical language commonly associated with the medium. In his philosophic poem Kafka shows man coming face to face with the enigma of his own existence and trying to find individual as well as universal justifications for being, which are based on something more than quantitative and rational data. Nothing but a caricature of his meaning and message would result if Kafka were to be judged by

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the standards of the realistic novel and the criteria of conventional typology. In its very assumptions, let alone in its conclusions, such a method would disregard an essential dimension in Kafka's universe, i.e. the poetic interpretation of reality; or, to be more precise, such an approach would fail to appreciate the sheer extent of the inexplicable. For it is not the splendour of his language that constitutes the essence of Kafka's poetry, but rather his imaginative grasp of the nature and purpose of reality and the way in which he incorporates the vastly inexplicable into this reality. Hence the impressive edifice of his writings is based not on the actuality of facts and data, but rather on that unique mixture of experience, dreams, and intuitions which lies at the heart of Kafka's universe. It discloses a highly private truth —objectively nothing more than, at best, a mere possibility; within its own personal terms it remains, however, hauntingly convincing, in spite of its refusal to approximate to an identifiable external reality.

Or to put it another way. In as much as Kafka's writings are poetry, there remains in them, as in all poetry, a residuum of mystery, something indefinably ambiguous and open to interpretation. Like all great poetry, Kafka's fluctuates between the concrete and the abstract, between life and annihilation. Shaped by reality no less than by intimations of the unknowable, it presents in all its poignancy and absurdity a vision of man's contradictory condition, poised as it is between the rational awareness and the subconscious experiencing of his senses. In bearing witness to the extreme anguish of these situations, it also creates its own myth.

Kafka's poetic fiction uncovers underlying realities and, exposing those states of human awareness that hover somewhere between the actual and the mysteriously apprehended, it leads towards the great enigmas of reality and truth. His poetic truth is identical with human wisdom and, relating the territories of the unknowable to philosophical insights, it fuses the actually experienced into a mysterious yet fully illuminated reality.

ANOTHER point of contact between Kafka and existentialist thought is provided by his view of man as a singular and unique mode of being within its specific and narrowly defined limits. We have seen that in his poetic philosophy Kafka perceives all truth as being strictly subjective and private, linked to the personality of the observer and the uniqueness of his experience. He therefore does not attempt to attain objectivity and totality. Since all views that aspire to depth and significance demand an original and uncompromisingly personal approach, Kafka's individual and highly idiosyncratic vision remains one of his greatest attractions. If a writer or thinker is to achieve individual relevance, he cannot interpret the world in terms other than those congenitally his own, and all we can receive from this splintered, fragmented world of ours are conflicting, even paradoxical, glimpses; a far cry indeed from the ontological wholeness of absolute reality.

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And since these regions remain *a priori* inaccessible, all a writer can do is to explore the individual; in the last analysis, himself. The essence of Kafka's philosophic quest is this search for man's specific condition and hence for the realities of his being. These he re-creates, and what confronts the reader from every page of his writings are the various aspects of a specifically human existence and order.

For Kafka man is unique, singular, suspended between the familiar and the enigmatic, a precarious precipitate of concrete existence in the here and now. Hence all attempts to claim Kafka for any aesthetic or sociological school are ill-judged, unless they try to analyse the character of the particular states and human realities that lie at the heart of Kafka's writings and permit the people who populate it to proclaim: 'I am here and now, *hic et nunc*'.

Invariably they inhabit the borderlands of extreme and ultimate situations, where the roots of human existence are laid bare and the mysteries become transparent. Although these realities are difficult to describe, they can be explained, provided one is prepared to acknowledge them. To exist means to be aware of man's predicament, of his final annihilation as an individual, of his anguish and struggle, his temptations and sins. In Kafka's cosmos antinomian structures such as liberty and servitude, worth and worthlessness, sociability and loneliness, constantly threaten the coherence of the existence of man. He is, moreover, always in danger of losing his integrity either by indulging his ego (subjectivity) or by abandoning himself to the world (objectivity).

The reality of man beset by ultimate extremities is—apart from the idea that truth in the human context exists only in personal and not in general terms—the other important philosophical concept for which Kafka's poetic imagination creates a perfect literary form.

Perhaps the way he probed the fathomless abyss of our existence precipitated the controversy between him and the proponents of that shallow rationalism which likes to pass itself off as a scientific philosophy because it is determined to turn a blind eye to the irrational in man. In this instance they allowed their dialectics to degenerate a little, to descend into a glib and tame rationalism, although dialectics as such is quite capable of breaking the fetters of a complacent, self-sufficient rationalism. Kafka's blue flower of imagination [*die blaue Blume* symbol of the German romantic movement] grew from the same soil that nurtured the romantic awareness of a reality that encompassed far more of the incongruous complexity of human experience than was ever dreamt of by the rationalists of the Enlightenment. Kafka embarked on these spiritual explorations not in order to assist in the facile spreading of some obscurantist faith, but rather in an effort to gauge more profoundly the whole range and dualistic nature of human emotions. If the aesthetics characteristic of the recent past in our country had to banish Kafka from its deliberations in order to maintain its own distorted ideology, dialectical materialism, if properly applied,

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will readily yield an appreciation of the importance of Kafka's imaginative vision, because it understands Hölderlin's line: 'Oh, how like a god is man when he dreams, and how beggarly when he reasons'.

There is a third point of contact with anthropological philosophy. Kafka's entire work bears the stamp of transcendental symbols and mysteries, which reduce man to a state of constant apprehension. In his writings human existence, threatened by transcendental orders, perpetually faces tense situations. In other words man is continuously confronted by a secularised version of God, who in the modern context reveals himself only in the anonymity of mystery. Man comes up against the riddle he has to solve.

Kafka's stories are merely the codes and tools of transcendence, an attempt to interpret the chaos of existence, a communication between existence and transcendence, between 'God and man'. The symbols are an integral part of the enigma, a code for the uncommunicable; they are of the language of transcendence that can address us only through these veiled symbols. Kafka's reality communicates in code and the only way to understand the message is to decode it. This needs stating lest we think Kafka deliberately chose this form of expression as a means to escape from reality. The exact opposite is true. His symbols illuminate transcendence, help to articulate the inexpressible, and provide guidelines for the human mind in the impenetrable jungle of social and psychological motivations.

The coded symbols are the only forms in which the inscrutable becomes visible and articulate; they alone express the totality of being in which man and his mysteries are included. Belonging to the infinite language of the absolute, they are like insubstantial shades blown into our ken from across the territories of transcendence.

HAVING examined Kafka's point of departure, the subjectivity of truth, and considered the nature of human reality in his writings, we have now to deal with the ultimate consequences of the struggle, with death and its symbols. This final phase, this collapse and disintegration, becomes credible only if it is not willed, if, although risked as in the case of the surveyor K., it is all the same resisted. Moreover, and although this sounds somewhat paradoxical, this disintegration takes on human significance only under the aspect of its arbitrariness. All existence entails struggle and man's ultimate annihilation in death is a necessary and integral part of the process of being that knows no permanency. All the antagonistic, insecure, transitory things are symbols of death and arouse apprehension, and yet these fearful intimations are part of the mainstream too, and help us to understand life more fully.

Kafka's writings reflect transcendence and mystery. Even from a philosophical point of view his work remains ambivalent and invites speculation about the man and his personality. It is quite possible that, having been rejected on a superficial level, he will now be accepted

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on the same level of superficiality as a representative of a bygone age. But this he is not; if anything he is representative of the tragic bewilderment of our own day, and of the human tragedy as such.

He is also the poet of the future. As long as man remains a riddle, at least to himself, and an open-minded being with an unpredictable potential for self-fulfilment—and this he will always be, provided he does not allow himself to be displaced by some automated machinery—Kafka will continue to fascinate those interested in the attempt to decode the human mysteries and willing to fight their way through to the wider perspectives of man's destiny and its significance.

The fusion of philosophy and literature accomplished by the mutual trend towards interpenetration, and the changes in the structure of social consciousness, individual self-awareness and confidence, no doubt provided the subsoil from which Kafka's writing grew. Even so, he would still have failed to meet the demand modern philosophy makes on true independence and individual responsibility had he been less successful in combining in his own person and writings the poet with the philosopher by superimposing the poetic transfiguration of reality onto the interpretation of his own existence. Kafka is poet and philosopher in one. For, after all, are not all true philosophers poets of the abstract, just as poets are the fashioners of images in which pure thought becomes persuasively visible.

Yet the unity of poetry and philosophy which Kafka wrought is not the specific attribute of his style or personality, but rather the expression of the sovereign human desire to articulate that incongruous, comprehensive oneness to which man is linked at the depth of his being. The poet in Kafka is representative of this essential humanity; far from dramatising his own insignificance, he attempts to plumb and accept the limitations of the human condition in himself. Nevertheless he remains always critical of these limitations; steadfastly refusing to entertain preconceived ideas, he is forever alive to the challenge the infinite mysteries present to the intellect. The poet Kafka is existence become aware of itself, a discoverer of its meaning in the human context. Gravely conscious of the human responsibility, free from any exaggerated pretensions to knowledge, he regards human existence as polarised tension between relevance and absurdity, happiness and misfortune, reality and hope, a mixture of despair and suffering. At the deepest level, the underlying and the apparent content of Kafka are one; man crying out in the wilderness of his own humanity.

(This version of his original contribution was abridged by the author for the German edition, from which the present translation has been made.)

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LITERATURE AND THE DRAMA

Vera Blackwell

SINCE the late 1950s we have been re-learning the lesson that silence does not always imply the absence of a voice, that what on the surface seems to be a totally Dark Age is in fact shot through with light. What is happening in the cultural life of Czechoslovakia today cannot be understood without taking account of the recent Dark Age. This period cannot be ignored: every new beginning—and one hears a lot about 'new beginnings' in Czech letters these days—is inextricably bound to the preceding end. The influence of the Dark Age on Czech literature and drama of the sixties is vast; only a lengthy study could do it full justice. Here only a few of the most striking features can be sketched, showing how this unnatural and vicious period produced some positive reactions.

Most western visitors to Czechoslovakia, particularly if they happen to be intellectuals, are startled above all by the avidity with which culture is sought and 'consumed' by the public these days. Young people are endlessly queueing outside bookshops for the latest volumes of poetry, short stories, novels. Large editions (30,000 or more) of *belles lettres* and of poetry, new Czech works as well as translations of recent western authors, are often sold out within a few hours. Small experimental theatre groups are multiplying and their performances are sold out well in advance. Poetry is recited before large audiences in large halls, and to small gatherings of young people in wine-cellars, where it is often accompanied by jazz. The literary cabaret has invented 'text-appeal' and other new forms of intellectual entertainment. Satire thrives. There is no doubt about it: the public wants culture, culture is in great demand.

Intellectuals, writers, men of the theatre, are among the most respected members of Czech society. A poet, a man of letters, is still for the Czechs what he was once for Emerson: a Doer, a Maker; he is a man of action, no trifler, no deviser of obscure solitary games in an Ivory Tower; a pioneer who from the virgin wilderness of the spirit conquers and cultivates new soil. Thus, to be actively engaged in any cultural endeavour brings respect as well as reward. And so it is that one finds so much sheer talent and creative energy concentrated on those activities which, for reasons of brevity, are designated here by the word 'culture'.

Art in Czechoslovakia is regarded as functional. Its role is to humanise society through enlightenment. (One hears a lot about 'humanism' these days.) Which, naturally, implies that belief in the perfectibility of man still prevails in Czechoslovakia no matter how deeply

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disguised it may be in some of the far-out creations,[1] in spite of the widespread and deep distrust of big words and big gestures, and in spite of the bitter ridicule with which the starry-eyed prophets of a future, and of course distant, bliss have lately been favoured.

To a student of Czech history all this sounds very familiar. It is a resounding echo of the nineteenth-century National Revival Movement, led by the intellectuals and conducted on intellectual grounds. Culture then was the spearhead of national emancipation, a political weapon, hence functional *par excellence*. The connection between this period and Stalinist times has been skilfully demonstrated by Jan Grossman.[2] He criticises both for their schematic view of reality, their substitution of *a priori* abstractions for facts, their utilitarianism, their dogmatism, their puritanical self-righteousness. But from his brilliant analysis one must, perhaps reluctantly, conclude that while in many ways this period disrupted most of the healthy traditions of Czech culture (including, ironically enough, the highly developed, dynamic, and distinctly left-wing *avant-garde* poetry and theatre of the years between the wars), it preserved or even resuscitated others, often through a curious inversion. It certainly passed on to the next generation the 'messianic' spirit which today permeates all that has to do with culture in Czechoslovakia. It forced the young to react violently to its horrendous distortions of reality.

But this is not all. Through the long years of total isolation (to the period of the fifties must be added the years of the German occupation) Czech society became a closed society, manageable in size, like a Greek *polis*. Thus poets, novelists, dramatists, producers, actors, can communicate directly with their public. They know each other. Almost everybody seems to know everybody else. In order that serious and basic questions of human existence may become a moving force for a whole society, they must be presented in intimately familiar terms, based on common experiences, fears, hopes, and aims.

The treatment of ethical and existential questions awakens a lively response from a very wide public precisely because the experiences which led to their being asked in the first place were widely shared. During the fifties both the writers and their future public were exposed to many corrupting influences; they were also forced by the circumstances to flex their moral muscles almost daily. Some cracked under the strain, some were strengthened. As Nietzsche says, what does not kill me gives me strength. Very real decisions between good and evil had constantly to be made; and often they involved the ultimate choice between life and death.

In other words, the experiences were not only shared but were also

[1] Such as the '*rollages*', '*chiasmages*', the so-called 'evident poetry', etc., of Jiri Kolar, the poetic 'texts' of Josef Hirsal and Bohumila Grogerova; or even what is mistakenly called 'The Czech Drama of the Absurd'. This drama mirrors absurd reality, but is in no way related to any metaphysical notions concerning the absurdity of human existence.

[2] *Forum*, June-July 1964.

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pretty drastic. Which means that the writer, the dramatist, and the poet do not have to whip themselves into a sense of life by heroin or by sexual perversions, nor is it necessary for them to shock the public in order to attract attention. What is in demand is not titillation of the senses, but an honest presentation of facts as they were during the fifties and as they are now, a sincere search for truth. And because, in Czechoslovakia, society is still closed, because its questionings are still concentrated on the essentials, because the common consciousness has still not been overwhelmed by the insoluble and vast problems that often petrify our creative powers, because the belief that man and man's lot can be improved by enlightenment still prevails, there is also hope that the truth will be found. Which may be naïve or wise, depending on the way we look at it, but it certainly does one important thing: it helps culture get off the ground.

WHEN handling any of the problems concerning Czechoslovakia today, one is handling the two sharp edges of a sword—and with bare hands at that. For example, the fact that most of the best writers were prevented (either by pressure from above or by voluntary abstention) from publishing their works during the fifties was certainly reprehensible. At the same time, this enforced silence gave them time to elaborate and to perfect work which might otherwise have been released prematurely, and enabled the beginners to prune and to reconsider their first flights of fancy. So that now, in the sixties, we are being presented with an unusually rich crop of finished works of art. So, too, writers in their forties are now for the first time entering the literary scene and form the 'new', the 'young', generation. Many among the older generations are re-entering it after a period of ten years or more. The very 'youngest' include writers around thirty.

The total severance of any contact with the outside world, both during the war and during the fifties, means that present-day Czech literature, to its advantage as well as to its cost, is practically devoid of contemporary influences. It is either entirely home-grown, or can be traced back to much older foreign works. Even when, occasionally, a new Czech play or novel or poem does remind us of a modern western author,[3] we find that it is simply a case of parallelism. All it proves is that the spirit bloweth whither it listeth, that currents of thought and of imagination in art (no less than in science) know no borders, that what Teilhard de Chardin calls the 'noosphere' really exists.

Many of the outside influences in contemporary Czech letters are pre-war or even older. In poetry one may hear echoes of Walt Whitman, Edgar Lee Masters, Carl Sandburg; in prose, echoes of Faulkner and Hemingway. These American poets reached the young generation via

[3] For example, Vaclav Havel's play *The Garden Party* suggests Ionesco; Josef Skvorecky's novel *The Cowards*, Salinger; Zdenek Mahler's drama *The Mill*, Peter Weiss' *Marat/Sade*; Vera Linhartova's novels, Alain Robbe-Grillet; Jiri Kolar's experiments with words and calligraphic images reflect *lettrisme*, etc.

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Group 42, formed during the war. The American novelists began to play their part in modern Czech prose primarily through translations made after the war.

The accent of the last two decades is on American influences, in sharp contrast to pre-war Czech literature, which was almost exclusively French-oriented. The break with France, a country with which Czechoslovakia had a spiritual love-affair for years, was the result of Munich. For the Czechs, France has never again become what she had been since the early nineteenth century, though she did come back during the brief spell between the end of the war and the fifties when, for a short time, the cultural achievements of the outside world could be glimpsed. The dominating personality of Czech cultural life at that time was Vaclav Cerny, who belonged to the last French-oriented generation and had been educated in France. His *Kriticky mesicnik* (Critical Monthly), suffused by Romance letters, his book on French existentialism, and his course of lectures on the same subject at the Charles University in Prague attracted the then young Czech intelligentsia to such an extent that even today there is hardly a play, novel, essay, or even an occasional poem that does not bear in one way or another the stamp of the thoughts which Cerny introduced into Czech cultural life.

The Czech art of translation is among the most developed in the world. Its scope is vast, surpassing by far similar efforts in France or in England. Translations have played a prominent part in Czech cultural life from the very beginning. Thus, at the start of the National Revival can be found the translations of Chateaubriand's *Atala* (1805) and of Milton's *Paradise Lost* (1811). The modern Czech theatre begins with the translations of Shakespeare (1782 and 1786). *Hamlet*, to give just one example, has been translated seven times since the first Czech versions was published in 1794. In the last few years the Czechs have been exposed to most of the latest western plays and to some of the latest novels. These translations include the works of Friedrich Dürrenmatt, Edward Albee, Arthur Miller, Robert Bolt, John Osborne, Arnold Wesker, J. D. Salinger, C. P. Snow, John Updike, Max Frisch, Samuel Beckett, Eugène Ionesco, Pär Lagerkvist, Alain Robbe-Grillet, Harold Pinter, John Arden, Peter Weiss. There are some glaring omissions, but—and this is one more of the ironies in which life today on both sides of the past Great Divide is so rich—it is more often the voice of the East that is muffled. While Solzhenitsyn's *Ivan Denisovich* or Mrozek's *Tango* are available, Pasternak's *Doctor Zhivago* is not, although a Czech rendering of his poems was recently published. On the other hand, the theatre has overtaken London in staging *Incident at Vichy*, *After the Fall*, *The Oppenheimer Case*. The western theatre *genre* which, perhaps with some justice, can be described as the most 'decadent', namely the musical, is also beginning to be domesticated in Czechoslovakia. A Czech version of *My Fair Lady* has been playing in Prague for over a year.

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All this translating activity can in the main be attributed to the fact that Czechoslovakia is a small country and, what is more, a country whose cultural contacts with the rest of Europe have been repeatedly disrupted. 'I can't help being grieved', complains Milan Kundera, 'that Czech literature should find itself—for the second time in the century and a half of its present existence—under the humiliating necessity of hastily "opening the windows to the world" and of "catching up with Europe"' (*Literarni noviny*, 5 June 1965). What Kundera is alluding to is the second half of the nineteenth century when, after an interval of cultural isolation and an outburst of romantic patriotism, the Czech intelligentsia strove to overcome the resulting provincialism by a tremendous effort to make Czech culture, on political as well as on humanist grounds, an equal partner with the established cultures of the world. In more senses than one, the reaction against the Stalinist times can be related to some aspects of the nineteenth century, as the Stalinist era itself can be to others.

THE first stirrings against the deadweight of socialist realism became evident in Czech poetry immediately after the twentieth CPSU congress.[4] At that time a group of young poets (including the scientist Miroslav Holub and the lyrist Miroslav Florian) gathered around the magazine *Kveten*. Almost exactly a hundred years earlier the similar Group Maj had begun to fight the professional patriot and his clichés by a severe adherence to the simplest words and the barest facts. It is interesting to note that the Kveten Group attacked very much the same enemy with very much the same weapons. The fact that the names of both groups are almost identical is doubtless pure chance[5]; nonetheless it does add an element of irony to the spiral movement of modern Czech literature.

The main struggle in Czech letters in the sixties of the nineteenth and the twentieth centuries was and is the struggle against vague abstractions. Both the young of this and of the preceding century insist on calling a spade a spade. Fog is as dangerous in the realm of the spirit as it is on the road. It is in the fog that accidents can occur most easily, and it is the fog which can most easily hide a killer. The tendency to abstract all thought and all reality which characterised the fifties resulted, among other things, in turning man into an object. Man ceased to be a creator of his destiny and became a passive cog in an impersonal social mechanism directed 'from above'. 'Abstractions', says Alexandr Kliment, defining the Stalinist attitude to actual individual human beings, 'can be crushed, cut up, filed away, slaughtered, or glorified. Abstractions are quite dumb; they do not answer back, particularly if one keeps them behind high walls, far from living men' (*Literarni noviny*, 8 February 1964).

[4] Almost unknown outside Czechoslovakia, poetry has always been the most potent of Czech literary *genres*.

[5] *Maj* in modern Czech is a literary expression meaning spring or May. The more colloquial word for May is Kveten.

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Today's struggle against vagueness thus includes repeated demands for personal responsibility and individual awareness. However, the foe in this case is not only the Stalinist who, in the name of abstract 'humanity', took away all the human attributes from man, but also the coward who, through active compromise or passive acquiescence, allowed himself to be stripped of his humanity. In keeping with nineteenth-century Marxist doctrine, the other foe is pinpointed by the term 'bourgeois'. This struggle is often interpreted—no doubt in order to remove its sting—as the natural revolt of the son against the father; a healthy and perfectly normal reaction of the younger generation against the old. It is, however, not quite so simple, since, as we have seen, the 'young' in this case also include the 'old'.

It is particularly the new Czech drama which occupies itself with the existential anaesthesia, the smoke-screen of concepts devoid of all meaning, and the mental sloth which allows men either to take them in earnest or to let them grow increasingly dense. The point of Vaclav Havel's satire *Zahradni slavnost* (The Garden Party) is that clichés have an almost occult power of turning into a pseudo-reality which, to all intents and purposes, is capable of functioning as reality itself. His second play, *Vyrozumeni* (The Memorandum), illustrates the corruption of those who know how to compromise with their consciences, and the way an inhuman system can be established largely through the moral apathy of the 'common man'. The dangerous indifference to the facts which determine the running of this world is satirised by Milan Uhde in *Kral-Vavra* (King Vavra). 'Of course I have an opinion', says one of his characters, 'but I disagree with it from the bottom of my heart'.[6] Milan Kundera's play *Majitele klicu* (Owners of Keys) is aimed at the 'bourgeois' tendency to shun all risk, and to consider inane survival as the highest of goods. The protagonist of Josef Topol's latest play, *Kocka na kolejich* (Cat on the Rails), insists, 'I want to know what I'm doing. . . . In the daylight. And face to face'.[7] Raf, in Topol's best-known drama, *Konec masopustu* (The End of the Carnival), strives for just that, and so does Dana in one of the earliest plays of this whole movement, *Zapas s andelem* (The Struggle with an Angel), by Frantisek Pavlicek. The central character of Ivan Klima's *Zamek* (The Castle) is murdered by the 'Establishment' because his eyes are open. The bubble must not be pierced by even a single ray of thought. Or, conversely, a single ray of thought can, and does, burst the bubble.

To remove thought from art seems to be the general tendency everywhere these days. Thus to find the Czechs proceeding in the opposite direction is very encouraging indeed. The impetus that set them on this way appears to have come principally from the small theatre groups. These formed themselves spontaneously, the first some eight years ago, through the urge of talented young people to communicate their real feelings and their real thoughts about life as they

[6] *Divadlo*, No. 10, 1964.
[7] Ibid. No. 2, 1965.

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lived it and as they saw it being lived around them. At once they became immensely popular, since they offered their audiences something the large 'official' theatres had been withholding from them for years: namely, spontaneity and truth.

'The most important thing about these ensembles is that they have managed to attract the public above all by their considerable demands on the intellect', writes Jan Grossman, director of the Drama Company of The Balustrade Theatre (leader and Alma Mater of the small theatre groups). 'These ensembles achieved the greatest response in so far as they diagnosed burning current problems, based on the authentic feelings of contemporary man. The most striking characteristic of this intellectual and analytical theatre is that . . . these problems are posed and demonstrated not in a didactic way, but as an appeal for a dialogue.' The dialogue between the stage and the audience is what this so-called 'Appellative Theatre' is after. It 'considers man to be a social being, fully and decisively engaged in all the social processes; it approaches man, however . . . from the standpoint he himself takes towards these processes as an infinitely complicated individual. The social relevance of this approach lies in its appeal for a common search for a solution. It does not attempt to instruct the public, or to provide any ready-made answers'.[8]

This is the urgent preoccupation of the Czech theatre and Czech literature today: a quest for truth, unhampered by any *a priori* concepts or dogmatic formulas. Yet, despite the seriousness with which the endless discussions of the various 'burning problems' are conducted, the favourite artistic expression of both prose and drama is satire, the predominant characteristic of young intellectuals their inexhaustible sense of humour. It is of many shades and hues, from the earthy and rather rough humour of Bohumil Hrabal, the subtle humour of Ivan Vyskocil, the highly sophisticated humour of Vaclav Havel, to the gentle, almost fay humour of Milos Macourek. The modern satire uses a vigorous, lively, colloquial idiom which, together with the slangy understatement of the young generation, appeared for the first time in Josef Skvorecky's novel *Zbabelci* (The Cowards), first published in 1958. Thus not only the dusty ideas but also the dusty language was 'cleaned up', shocked by a cold shower of sense out of its stilted posturing.

The search and the dialogue continue. In spite of the repeated assurances that what really matters is not so much the goal as the quest itself, honesty in putting the right questions in the right way, it is obvious that the goal cannot be dismissed so easily. Without a doubt, all this activity and all this humour reflect the hope that somewhere, sometime, the truth will be unearthed.

[8] *Pro a proti 63*; A Symposium (Prague, 1965), p. 68.

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ECONOMIC REFORM IN PERSPECTIVE

J. M. Montias

PUBLIC opinion in the West 'takes in' political developments in Eastern Europe with a lag of several years: it still thinks of Poland as the most liberal communist country when in several important respects Poland has fallen behind her sister nations; it is just becoming aware of the thaw in Czechoslovakia when the trend towards liberalisation has already lost most of the momentum that propelled it forward in 1963.

At that time the dogmatic forces headed by President Novotny were in disarray. The pressure to aerate the sordid secrets of the Stalinist past, to rehabilitate fully its victims, dead or alive, seemed irresistible. The Slovak communists, who had suffered more than their share of the repressions, were nudging the Prague leadership towards reforms and resisting central pressures.

In June 1963 two events marked Slovakia's growing alienation from the Novotny regime: the Slovak television network found a technical pretext for its failure to televise Novotny's key-note speech at Kosice; and a sensational article by M. Hyzko attacking Premier Siroky was published by Bratislava's *Pravda*, with the connivance of liberal allies in Prague, but without Novotny's permission. Throughout the summer *Kulturny zivot*, the Slovak cultural weekly, printed inflammatory articles both on the Stalinist past and on the acute problems caused by the economic crisis besetting the entire country at the time.

The situation in Czechoslovakia in mid-1963 was similar to that which preceded Gomulka's return to power in Poland in 1956, while the more recent evolution recalls the gradual consolidation of party power under Gomulka's leadership from October 1956 on. The first phase of political developments in both countries was marked by the spontaneous, sporadic, and uncontrolled character of deviant manifestations, the second by their containment and the spread of more broadly based 'regulated freedoms'.

How was Novotny able to turn the tide? The dismissal of Siroky and his replacement by Jozef Lenart as Premier in the autumn of 1963 must have strengthened his hand appreciably. Lenart, who is unquestionably more liberal and popular among both Czechs and Slovaks than Siroky or his fellow-members of the party's presidium at present, was entrusted with the machinery of the government—hence with wide responsibilities in the cultural and economic field—without a strong power base in the party *apparat* and with negligible influence in the presidium itself, which is dominated by Novotny's conservative allies. Another liberal, Cestmir Cisar, was also vested with public responsibility without real power—in his case a clear demotion, since

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he lost his post as party secretary in charge of cultural matters, where his relatively tolerant attitude had fostered the growth of revisionist tendencies, to be appointed Minister of Culture, an executive position where he was deprived of any substantive policy-making role.

Novotny succeeded in bringing the cultural scene under control through a combination of timely concessions and administrative measures. Perhaps the most notable of the latter was the appointment of Juraj Spitzer, a repentant ex-Stalinist but still a reliable executor of central party policies, as Chairman of the Slovak Writers' Association. The President also found it possible to mollify his opposition, both in and out of the party, by displaying minor but conspicuous signs of independence from Moscow, thereby appealing to the long-repressed nationalism of his subjects. In public he praised Khrushchev after the Soviet leader had been overthrown. But it is also rumoured that he telephoned Brezhnev shortly after the coup to demand an explanation of the affair and to complain that he had not been consulted or warned of its imminence; dissatisfied with Brezhnev's explanations, he allegedly put down the receiver before the new Soviet party secretary had finished his story. Whether or not the incident occurred in this exact form, the anecdote helped to dispel the impression that Novotny was a mere stooge of Moscow.

The consecration of cultural liberties—the new tolerance for abstract art, 'concrete' poetry, and other formalist trends on the one hand, and much greater laxity in issuing passports to the West on the other—helped to pacify the intellectual community. In retrospect, it is remarkable how little ballast Novotny had to throw overboard to bring the intellectuals' dissidence under control; but we must keep in mind that even moderately successful intellectuals live under privileged material conditions in a communist state. Once an artist is allowed to work more or less as he pleases, he has little else to vent his discontent on. Only solidarity with the condition of his less privileged fellow-citizens, a sensitivity to the political problems of the entire nation, can keep alive his opposition. In this respect the situation in the Czech lands differs from that in Slovakia. The unsatisfied nationalist aspirations of the Slovaks, their resentment of Prague's tutelage, their less individualistic, more socially conscious attitude towards cultural achievement, are so many factors making for national cohesiveness. Slovak nationalism slows down the trend towards the desolidarisation of the intellectual community under the influence of liberalisation, which process has already gone quite far in Bohemia and Moravia.

There is at least one intellectual quarter, however, where aspirations are being cultivated that cannot so easily be satisfied by the enlightened measures of an essentially despotic government. A number of political scientists, scholars who call themselves sociologists and lawyers, are beginning to ponder the nature of political organisation in a socialist state. There is a new interest, even within the confines of such former bastions of orthodoxy as the Institute of Law, in the workings of

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'bourgeois democracies'. The younger specialists in this field are beginning to understand the advantages of a division of powers in a governmental system, irrespective of the ultimate goals—communist or otherwise—pursued by society. These abstract notions are bolstered by a reconsideration, on the part of historians as well, of the First Republic's achievements and of Thomas Masaryk's contribution as a political philosopher. If these ideas are allowed to take root, they will eventually provide theoretical support for political demands that cannot be met without profound changes in the present dictatorship.

BESIDES these social factors, changing economic circumstances have exerted a powerful influence over the political evolution of recent years. The rapid economic growth of the years 1958 to 1960 strengthened the party's power; the progressive deterioration of the years 1961 to 1963, which led to the abandonment of the third five-year plan, undermined its position; finally, the slight apparent improvement of 1964 and 1965 helped to stabilise the tottering leadership. In as much as the country's prosperity hangs on the prospects of radical change in the economic system, it may be helpful to review the background and to describe the present state of preparation of these institutional reforms.

Czechoslovakia's economy suffers from two long-standing ailments: first, its structure is maladjusted to domestic and foreign demand; secondly, its operation is highly inefficient, in the sense that resources are misallocated and that technical progress is not being generated to any satisfactory extent. The reformers hope to remedy, if not to cure, both diseases with the same prescription: by creating a more flexible, decentralised system, responsive to changing domestic and foreign requirements and capable of providing incentives for efficient management.

The present structure of the economy can be traced to the strategic decisions adopted by the party between 1949 and 1951, which reoriented Czech industry away from its traditional concentration on consumer-goods industries in order to create an 'arsenal' for the development needs of the socialist bloc, particularly of its less developed members. Czech heavy industry was also allotted the task of delivering a substantial portion of the military hardware required by the less industrialised economies during the Korean War. By 1953, Czechoslovakia was supplying over half of Rumania's total imports of machinery and equipment, nearly a third of Hungary's, and a quarter of Poland's (*Nova mysl*, No. 10, 1956, p. 1012). The New Course inaugurated after Stalin's death in each of the satellites and the sudden termination of the Korean War brought about new conditions unfavourable to Czechoslovakia's recently expanded capacities. A Czech economist complained soon afterwards that, as a result of the lack of coordination of post-1953 policies, 'the Czechoslovak economy, which had been built up as the machine works of the socialist camp, suddenly found itself faced by the curtailment of its market' (*Politicke ekonomie*, No. 4, 1956, p. 241).

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Starting in 1955, Comecon, which was supposed to promote specialisation in the bloc, disappointed Czechoslovakia's hopes: the less developed countries kept on expanding their own machine-building industries, often in parallel with existing capacities in the more developed economies. Among the outlets that remained, Czechoslovakia's formerly dominant position as a purveyor of machinery and armaments to the communist states was never restored. In recent years she has lost a good deal of ground to competition within the bloc, chiefly on the part of East Germany, but also to competition from western Europe. (By 1962 Czechoslovakia was supplying barely over 10 per cent of Rumania's total machinery imports, or less than one-fifth her share of the Rumanian market in 1953.) The deterioration in Czechoslovakia's competitive position may be attributed partly to shortcomings in the 'model', which failed to generate sufficient technical progress to meet the requirements of foreign customers for modern highly productive equipment, and partly to the hand-to-mouth existence she had to lead to pay for her imported raw materials and foodstuffs. This harsh constraint caused her to export an excessive share of her best machinery output, to the detriment of her domestic replacement needs, as a result of which her equipment, particularly in light industry, became increasingly obsolescent. Balance-of-payments problems also prevented her from improving the quality of some of her products by importing the necessary ingredients. For example, one of several reasons for Rumania's search for alternative suppliers in the last few years is that the boilers she bought in the past from Czechoslovakia were made from poor quality steels, which did not meet specifications of resistance to corrosion. The quality of these steels, in turn, depended on imported inputs.

If it had not been for the Soviet Union's willingness to absorb the major part of Czechoslovakia's growing machinery surplus in exchange for the raw materials required for its metal-intensive industry, the present crisis in the Czech economy would have broken out long before 1963. But even the Soviets will not be content with obsolescent design and middling quality of execution. They too have been shifting some of their purchases, particularly of chemical equipment, to the West. The question now is whether the reforms envisaged for the system can repair the damage done by the decline in the reputation of Czech industrial products and help to regain some of the outlets lost in recent years.

A first attempt at a thorough-going reform in the management of the socialist sector was made in 1958–59. Without fuss, the Czechoslovaks went further towards decentralising their economy at that time than any other communist country, with the exception of Yugoslavia, before or since. Enterprises were allowed to plan, undertake, and finance more than half the total volume of investments, under the perfunctory supervision of the central authorities. Bonuses linked to profits were assigned a major role in a new constellation of material incentives.

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A price reform was carried out that tied prices systematically to branch-wide production costs. To set against these centrifugal measures, however, one politically significant centripetal move deserves mention: the Slovaks lost their partial administrative autonomy when Slovakia's 'trusteeships' (*povierenstvi*), responsible for the execution and control of the plans in various branches of the economy, were dissolved.

As things turned out, the reorganisation of the economy was a failure, in part because it was only half-hearted, in part because it was sapped by the over-ambitious long-term plan for 1961 to 1965 that was elaborated simultaneously with the new system. The reforms were half-hearted in that they weakened central controls without creating a flexible system of efficiency prices to guide enterprises towards production and consumption decisions in harmony with central policy. Simultaneously, the five-year plan, which overstrained the country's resources, brought on a balance-of-payments crisis, which was aggravated by the adverse effects of collectivisation and by the collapse of the China trade. To avoid disaster, the state was eventually compelled to curb investments and to force changes in enterprises' production schedules—initiatives that were of course quite out of keeping with the spirit of the reforms.

THE renewed reliance on administrative interference in 1962–63 vindicated all parties: the partisans of decentralisation argued that the reforms had not gone far enough and that, in any event, they had never been given a chance to take effect; the centralists, including President Novotny, were confirmed in their belief that a loosening of the reins bridling the economy must necessarily lead to chaos and anarchy and that a recentralisation had been inevitable.

Since the centralists had the upper hand politically, the reforms were rescinded, and the old system of managing the economy directly from Prague was fully reinstated by 1963. This happened to be the year when the chronic troubles of industry and agriculture were aggravated by the onset of a harsh winter, the year when the economy reached its low point, with a 4 per cent drop in national income, an unprecedented (though slight) decline in gross industrial output, and a setback in labour productivity both in the industrial and the construction sectors. This dismal record, dismal at least by the standards communists generally apply to appraise an economy's performance, invited renewed criticism. The analysis of Czechoslovakia's economic failures, under conditions of greater political laxity, gave rise once again to a search for what western specialists elegantly call 'systemic improvements'. The Slovaks were glad of the chance to pick apart a system which left them virtually no autonomy, not even the opportunity of deciding which factories or lines of production should be closed in their part of the country when reductions were in order.

The revival of the discussion on the optimal model of the socialist economy was one of the token prices Novotny had to pay to keep the

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intellectual community out of harm's way. The energies absorbed in debating the model were deflected from the more dangerous political channels into which they might otherwise have flown.

The moving spirit of the reforms is a member of the party central committee named Otakar Sik, a man still in his middle forties. When, in 1963, he was named director of the Economic Institute of the Academy of Sciences, his qualifications for the job consisted mainly in a thorough knowledge of Marxist doctrine. His writings, since about 1962, can be called revisionist, in the strict sense that they have reinterpreted traditional dogma; but they have remained essentially exegetic. Within these confines, he reached the conclusion, probably at the beginning of the sixties, that the 'law of value', essentially, the influence of prices, profits, and incentives on decision-makers, must play a much greater role than they had played hitherto in the producer-goods as well as in the consumer-goods sector. What he had observed of the Yugoslav economy convinced him that, in the main, the Yugoslav way to socialism had more merit, at least at a higher stage of development, than the Soviet model.

When the reorganisation of 1958–59 aborted, Sik was among the first to claim that it had failed because it had not gone far enough. In the autumn of 1963 he was appointed a member of the Ideological Commission of the central committee; it is symptomatic of his background and role that he was not named a member of the Economic Commission also set up at the time, which consisted chiefly of communist funtionaries with administrative experience. Indeed, Sik has little practical knowledge of the economy, and his quantitative understanding of its structural relations is especially deficient. While his enthusiasm for reform is real enough, and he understands very well the dangers of inconsistent compromises, he has not the facts at his command to confute the conservatives, who are fighting decentralisation with two 'concrete' arguments: they claim (1) that a decentralised organisation cannot accomplish the necessary redeployment of resources that will solve the structural problem, and (2) that the country's available reserves, in the form of inventories and foreign exchange assets, are insufficient to carry through an uncertain experiment of such scope to a successful issue.

In January 1965 the central committee made public its 'resolutions on the improvement of the economic system', which have served as guide-lines for various working groups and commissions elaborating more detailed and concrete proposals. One essential departure of the new principles from the previous reform lies in the domain of price formation. The notion of price stability, which had for years dominated the thinking of the administrators of the Czechoslovak economy, was rejected, at least in its previous shape. Three types of prices were to be assigned to different categories of goods. Prices fixed for a given period (for raw materials, semi-fabricates, and essential foodstuffs);

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prices to be agreed between contracting parties within centrally prescribed limits (for most final goods); and free prices for commodities of minor importance, which would not affect vitally either the production costs of industrial buyers or the standard of living of private consumers. According to an article in *Nepszabadsag* of 23 March 1965, based on an interview with Dr Vlasak, Chairman of Czechoslovakia's Commission for the coordination of Scientific and Technical Research, and with J. Toman, a high official in the Planning Commission, freely priced goods will amount to '7 per cent of consumption in the beginning and 10 per cent at a later stage'. Whatever these proportions may mean, it is apparent from the rest of the interview, largely devoted to the control of 'speculative tendencies', that these powerful functionaries, who have shown limited sympathy in the past for decentralisation, have no intention of allowing the market to operate except under stringent controls. Such a fettered market would of course be incapable of articulating the radical transformation required to bring about a lasting improvement in the country's balance of payments.

The new principles of price formation that are to be applied by the central authorities to the prices they will be responsible for setting will include, among other novelties, an allowance for interest charges on the capital invested in each industry. These prices, according to *Rude Pravo* of 4 September 1965, will not be ready until 1968, two years after the main financial provisions of the general reform will have been introduced. Except for the decision to prepare a partial reform of raw-material prices in early 1966, the same basic mistake seems to have been committed as when complex new financial measures were put into effect in 1959: enterprises will be encouraged to maximise profits and, more generally, to concentrate on improving their financial indices at a time when these value aggregates will still be based on prices that express incorrectly the relative scarcities relevant to the central planners. To invoke a familiar metaphor, the devolution of economic power under these conditions is tantamount to letting a ship find its way to the harbour with a false compass.

Although there is a deplorable lack in official writings and speeches of serious comparisons with the previous reform, the section on investments in the central committee document shows that one important lesson at least was learned from the preceding fiasco: this time, all investments, whatever their source of finance, will be coordinated and controlled from above. The framers of the new system are not counting on any spontaneous reconciliation of supply and demand for investment resources by way of voluntary agreements between investors and contractors, a method which, when tried out in 1960 and 1961, had led to the proliferation of small projects to the detriment of priority investments. By such centralised controls, the reformers may also be hoping to avoid the inflation-generating disequilibria between aggregate supply and demand that have plagued Yugoslavia for years. It is interesting also that 'financial instruments', similar to those in use in Yugoslavia,

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will be applied to induce investors to economise on capital. An interest charge is to be levied on all productive assets at the disposal of enterprises; furthermore, borrowers will pay interest, presumably at a higher rate, on funds lent to them for capital investment. As in 1958–59, however, the principal source of decentralised finance will be the depreciation allowances deposited by enterprises in their accounts at the National Bank. It is said that the fourth five-year plan recently presented to parliament is 'unbalanced'. This would seem to repeat the mistakes made in carrying out the 1958–59 reforms. Unbalanced plans create disproportions which usually manifest themselves in inflationary pressures, materials shortages, etc. These in turn make it necessary for the central planners to intervene directly 'to put things right', thus making a mockery of decentralisation and undermining its primary purpose.

THE present reform continues the trend started in 1958 towards the concentration of productive capacities in fewer enterprises, each of which can be entrusted with the monopoly management of an entire sector. Out of 1,417 national enterprises in existence before the 1958 reform, 383 'productive economic units' had been created, made up of 316 leading enterprises and 67 associations of smaller and scattered enterprises. In 1965 the number of leading enterprises was reduced to 100. There will be only four enterprises in the steel industry and five in chemicals, compared to a total of 36 previously (*Rude Pravo*, 2 June 1965).

Each sector (*obor*) will be organised as a 'productive economic unit', consisting either of several enterprises with equivalent status or of a leading enterprise together with its auxiliary enterprises. In both cases research and development facilities, as well as other functional departments necessary to plan and to operate the sector in the most comprehensive manner, will be incorporated into the unit. To direct the productive economic unit, sector administrations have been set up as an intermediate echelon between ministries and enterprises. (This echelon, incidentally, had been abolished some years back, in 1958.) For the first time, however, the sector administration will itself be on cost accounting, and its personnel will be remunerated according to the financial results of its ward enterprises. The administrations that have already been established in some industries are said to be working closely with their ministries and with the central committee of the party itself to prepare the long-term plans for their sector. If, as seems likely, the real locus of power in deciding the production profile of a sector is going to reside in these intermediary agencies, it is doubtful whether the enlarged enterprises themselves, let alone the plants which were formerly enterprises on their own account but have now been merged into larger units, will have appreciably more leeway to conduct their business according to conditions in the field than they had in the past.

On 23 September 1965 the *Compendium of Laws* of the Czechoslovak

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Socialist Republic published a Government Declaration, dated 25 August 1965, which will serve as the legal framework of the reform. Quotations from the text are given at some length, partly for its intrinsic interest, but also because it represents a fine example of the type of official communist pronouncement that can be given almost any operational content, depending on who happens to be in charge of carrying out its provisions.

One of the first questions anyone might wish to ask about the reform is whether the administrative machinery for commanding and controlling the economy will be dismantled and, if so, whether it will be replaced by a system of coordination through markets, financial levers, and other indirect pressures. The announcement, as the following extracts testify, provides no clear-cut answer to this question.

> The chief instruments to ensure planned development are, on the one hand, compulsory tasks, binding limits, and guiding plan indicators, and, on the other, economic instruments.

The following are compulsory tasks:

> State scientific and technical assignments
> Specifically listed investments
> Export tasks and specific deliveries of goods important for the development of external relations and for the fulfilment of international obligations
> Tasks concerning the training of cadres
> Specific production tasks
> Defence tasks
> Tasks relating to the development of Slovakia and in the provinces

Binding limits may be set for:

> The volume of investments in a sector and the total volume of investments not specifically listed; the volume of construction carried out by construction enterprises.
> Non-investment expenditures by centrally directed budgetary organisations for science and research.
> Total commodity imports as well as the import of specifically listed goods important for the development of the economy.
> The number of persons employed, wherever this may be essential for ensuring the proportional development of the economy.
> The wage fund, as well as other indicators, in organisations where the development of wages is not guided by economic instruments.
> The consumption of certain materials or electric energy.

Binding tasks and limits are set in the long-term plan; as 'need arises', they may be specified in greater detail in the current plans, along with 'additional tasks and limits'.

> Tasks and limits are assigned to central organs and to national committees, which in turn may ensure their fulfilment either by economic instruments or by issuing binding tasks and limits to their subordinate organisations. Central organs and national committees may widen the scope of the binding tasks and limits set by the government in the long-term or in the short-term plan only

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> exceptionally, in cases where they are imposing extraordinary tasks. . . . Binding tasks may be set only for the production of especially important concretely defined goods, and this only in specified quantities.

Exceptionally, a specific task may be set for the production of a larger group of commodities, in cases where:

(a) objective conditions limit the effectiveness of economic instruments;

(b) the effectiveness of economic instruments and market relations cannot be relied on (deliveries for export, for the internal market, for specifically listed investment projects, etc.).[1]

> Economic administrative organs will analyse deviations between the actual economic development and the guiding indicators of the state plan and on this basis arrive at conclusions concerning the operational use of economic instruments and the application of measures involving the utilisation of reserves, imports, and investments. . . . If the deviations in question significantly threaten the fulfilment of the basic tasks of the state plan, the government will stipulate additional binding tasks and limits or will instruct central organs and national committees to safeguard the proportions of the state plan by assigning extraordinary tasks, and this in cases where the use of economic instruments would not be effective.

On the economic instruments themselves, the Government Declaration has this to say:

> The organs of the economic administration are obliged to employ economic instruments in such a way as to create a material incentive for enterprises to improve and to expand production, to adapt it flexibly to the needs of society, and to increase labour productivity on the basis of the systematic use of new technology.

The long-term instruments include schedules of percentage deductions from 'gross income' (sales minus turnover taxes minus material costs), interest charges on capital assets, and the variable proportion of depreciation allowances left at the disposal of the enterprise. Short-term instruments also comprise a whole gamut of indirect controls and financial inducements, including prices, utility tariffs, wage scales, labour-productivity norms, working-capital and investment credits, loans in foreign currency, specific subsidies, and the share of certain sector-wide investments that must be financed by contributions from the enterprise.

To make sure that enterprises, after meeting all their obligations from their gross income, will not distribute too large a share of the remainder to their workers, steeply progressive additional deductions

[1] These provisions allow for the stipulation both of specific targets and of gross output, since the latter may be interpreted as a target for a 'larger group of commodities' Otakar Sik, in a lecture in West Berlin on the impending reforms, had stated that enterprises would receive only 'guiding figures' (*Orientation Ziffern*) for their production programme, not binding targets (*Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, 15 March 1965).

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will have to be paid to central organs, in accordance with the discrepancy between average wages paid and some basic average wage established for the enterprise.

ONE of the most positive sides of the 1965 reform, compared to the previous experiment, is the severance of incentives from performance according to plan. Whatever limitations may be imposed on the distribution of residual profits to employees, their volume at least will not have any relation to a plan magnitude; it is not to be a subject for *ex ante* bargaining with superior authorities.

With the exception of specific improvements, such as I have just mentioned, the framework of the reform, as laid out in the Government Declaration of 25 August, seems so loose that it can accommodate anything from a regulated market system to a tightly centralised set-up such as was in operation in 1963. Who, if not the central planners themselves, is to judge whether deviations from the plan 'significantly threaten the fulfilment of the plan', or whether special circumstances make it necessary to widen the scope of compulsory directives? Will they not be free to manipulate the economic instruments to force enterprises to comply with their detailed directives? In what way has the state really restricted its power of interfering in the routine affairs of producers?

On the whole the impression remains that the party has committed itself to very little. If it wishes to hamper the decentralisation, it can restrict the scope of free prices to insignificant commodities, set narrow limits that will in effect rig prices wherever flexibility has been provided for, and use the sector administrations and the National Bank as transmission belts for central directives. By these and other devices it can preserve the essentials of the old command economy. All the clamour notwithstanding, the new model is still in the formative stage. No one knows, for example, whether enterprises will be allowed to engage in foreign trade on their own initiative. No doubt some of them will, but how many and to what extent remains in question.

The question bandied about in Prague these days is whether the forces in the party that favour a liberal interpretation of the January directives, that support a real deconcentration of economic power, will prevail against the conservative opposition. It is said that in the party presidium itself only Jozef Lenart, who was once employed by the Bata Works when it was a private firm and has retained some understanding for the complexities of efficient management, wants a thorough overhaul of the system. His fellow-members, and above all Novotny himself, are going along with the reform so far as a necessary evil but hardly from internal conviction. It may be significant, in connection with the attitude of presidium members to the reform, that one of the initial impulses for change in the system came from the Soviet Union itself, when Khrushchev threw his support behind proposals for decentralisation at the time of his visit to Prague in

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August 1964. Unfortunately, the views of the new Kremlin leaders on the Czech reform have not been reported.

The ministers in charge of industrial branches are said to be against decentralisation, as are most influential officials of the Planning Commission, although it is also said that there has been a change of heart on the part of some of these functionaries, especially among those responsible for price formation.

Many economic administrators, unable to envisage the workings of a decentralised system, are reluctant to embark on fundamental changes without years of preparation and study. They hamstring the reform more by their inertia than by outright opposition. A strong current against the reform emanates from party officials in the provincial National Committees, who foresee that their power will be curtailed if enterprises are cut adrift from administrative regulation. District party secretaries represent an important minority in the central committee of the party; together with various conservative allies, they are said to form a strong enough opposition to block any proposals for the creation of a market-type economy. At present it seems unlikely that there will be significant changes in personnel at any level; this is liable to frustrate the intentions behind the new model. If, as is rumoured, those in charge of its operation are the very people who were most strongly opposed to its introduction, the scheme will be undermined from within.

Enterprise directors are not all happy about the prospects for reform either. Many directors who are getting large bonuses now without great exertions are worried about the uncertainties of the future; some who banked their career on their party connections and on their understanding of the rules of the game in a command economy know they will be at a relative disadvantage when it comes to competing with men of middle-class background with experience in running a firm according to business principles. Many rank-and-file workers, in so far as they care at all about the reforms, are apprehensive of greater wage differentiation, which might leave them at least relatively worse off than before. The Slovak communists want more administrative autonomy but fear that the new stress on profit criteria will work to the disadvantage of Slovakia, where industrial investments have been located, irrespective of 'rentability', for the sake of industrialising this less developed part of the country. (During the central committee debates in January that preceded the adoption of the party resolutions, Mical Sobolcik, one of the top officials in the Slovak Communist Party, pointed out that many chemical plants in Slovakia, which had been working at a profit, could not pay the 4 per cent interest charge tentatively set on their capital assets without suffering losses; several months later, it was announced that the charge would be reduced to 2 per cent for less developed areas, including Slovakia: *Figyelö*, 9 June 1965.)

It is manifest then that there is no unanimity in any quarter for a

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radical change in the system. Yet 'informed public opinion', the crystallised consensus of numerous dispersed but influential individuals in all regions and in all walks of life, seems to desire such a change devoutly. Their scattered forces will have to wage an uphill fight to overcome the resistance of those who stand to lose by the reform, and who are, for the most part, in a better position to mobilise forces within the present political system to support their opposition than they are to defend it. This consideration leads to the most basic question, which is whether the present political regime can be reconciled to any economic order but the one which has prevailed in Czechoslovakia since the installation of the communist dictatorship.

Like the progress of the threatening army of Fortinbras which precipitates the action in Hamlet, the performance of the Czech economy forms the background against which the contending forces are playing out their struggle. A further deterioration of the economic situation might well impel the final dénouement of Czechoslovakia's institutional crisis. However, there has been an upturn in the last year. Gross industrial output, the economic indicator the party leaders are most concerned about, has been rising at an annual rate of 4 to 5 per cent. If the economy can resume a rate of industrial growth of this magnitude, and if the most pressing problems of the country's balance of payments can somehow be palliated, the pressure for institutional reform will almost certainly abate. The recent improvement may persist for two or three years, since a number of projects launched during the great investment drive of 1959 to 1962 will be coming to fruition between 1966 and 1968. Beyond that, when the investment trough of 1963 to 1965 will begin to depress output, there will be some lean years in the offing. If the reforms are emasculated in the next year or two, another chance to overhaul the system may come before the end of the decade.

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THE NEW ECONOMIC MODEL

Jan Michal

IN the long run Czechoslovakia may become a good ground for testing the workability of the market under socialism. It may even provide a more appropriate try-out of the efficiency of market socialism than Yugoslavia, where the enforcement of extensive structural changes may still have a higher priority than marginal adjustments through the market, and where some of the necessary prerequisites, such as highly developed systems of communications, transport, and banking, are less adequate. But in the short run the present 'disproportions', the disequilibrium prices, and other destabilising institutional and psychological factors inherited from the past eighteen years of central planning in Czechoslovakia, may make the transition to the new market socialism very difficult; and, unlike Yugoslavia, Czechoslovakia has little hope of obtaining substantial credits from abroad during the transitional period. It is therefore necessary to enquire first into the present state of the economy before attempting to outline the proposed new system and its chances of proving superior to the old direct planning.

One of the serious difficulties of providing a statistical picture of Czechoslovakia's economic situation is the lack of a common denominator of cost and 'use value' of different goods and services. The monetary unit (Czechoslovak crown) cannot serve this purpose because prices in Czechoslovakia are very far from reflecting the substitution ratios in production (relative cost) and in consumption (relative utility). In theory, wholesale prices (charged within the socialist sector for purchases by the state-owned enterprises, collectives, the government, the party) are supposed, according to the government directive of 14 March 1956, to reflect 'the own cost of production'.[1] But the own-cost-plus-small-profit principle was not put into practice. Wholesale prices, as last revised in January 1964, still deviate substantially from the pattern of 'own cost of production'. The main purpose of this latest, more or less general, revision—which had been prepared before the party accepted the new economic principles—was not so much to change the price structure as to reduce the level of wholesale prices in order to reduce the net money incomes of enterprises and so make them more dependent on centralised funds, thus reinforcing central control.[2] Because of the irrational structure of wholesale prices, some efficient enterprises suffer relative or absolute losses and

1 'Own cost' does not include the rate of interest on fixed capital. This discrimination in favour of capital-intensive output has created an excessive demand for fixed capital assets. 'Pay-off' period calculations had to be substituted for the allocational role of interest on fixed capital in order to ration the available supply of machines and equipment among the enterprises applying for them.

2 Average profits in industry fell from 9·4 per cent of gross revenue in 1963 to 3·6 per cent in 1964.

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have to be subsidised, while some inefficient ones realise above-the-norm profits. An indication of the scale of planned subsidies was given recently by Minister of Finance Dvorak, who said: 'To secure the planned remittances of enterprise profits to the state [26 milliard crowns], price subsidies totalling 16·2 milliard crowns will be granted from the state budget in 1966. These subsidies correct, at least in part, the most serious distortions of wholesale prices'.[3]

There is also a great gap between the pattern of wholesale prices and the pattern of 'use value' as seen by the consumers. This gap is supposed to be bridged by a very high and very discriminatory turnover tax included in the retail price (charged for purchases by households and other buyers outside the socialist sector). In this way, partial equilibria in consumer goods markets are supposed to be secured. In reality, however, large unsaleable surpluses of some consumer goods accumulate, while other goods are in short supply. Some of these shortages (salt, onions, etc.) result from temporary local breakdowns in distribution or from 'buying panics'; other shortages reflect the failure of the turnover tax to bring the quantity demanded down to the supplies on the market.[4]

Because of these price distortions, aggregates in money terms are of dubious economic meaning. But even statistics in physical units have to be interpreted with caution. Under direct central planning, part of production was just for production's sake. The products did not have to pass the market test for utility and quality. Hence the lowering of quality and the high percentage of rejects, for which the statistics have not been adequately adjusted. Some Czechoslovak statistical concepts yield quite unrealistic results. For instance, the gross value index of industrial production shows an increase for 1948–64 of 6·7 times, while the official income (net product) originating in industry increased only threefold. Western re-computations of the index of Czechoslovak industrial production[5] also reject the rate of industrial growth as reflected by the official index. Finally, some of the important statistics (wholesale price index, actual revenue from turnover tax, subsidies, balance of payments, etc.) have been withheld from publication in the latest *Statistical Yearbook 1965*.

In spite of these difficulties, the available figures do reflect, by and large, the most important economic changes. Population and employment statistics are fairly reliable. At the end of 1964, out of the present population of 14·1 million, 6·4 million persons (2·8 million women) 'worked in the national economy'; 84 per cent were employees, 13 per

[3] Report on the 1966 budget: *Rude Pravo*, 19 December 1965.

[4] Minister Cernik is reported to have said that unsaleable stocks totalling 24·3 milliard crowns accumulated in 1960–63. This figure may include some unsaleable capital goods. The number of applicants who paid a deposit of 20,000 crowns and are waiting for delivery of an automobile increased from 92,000 in December 1963 to 102,000 in December 1964 and approximately 114,000 in June 1965.

[5] Cf. Alfred Zauberman, *Industrial Development in Czechoslovakia, East Germany and Poland* (London, 1958), and George J. Staller, 'Czechoslovak Industrial Growth 1948–59', *American Economic Review*, No. 3, 1962.

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cent members of collectives, mostly agricultural, 3 per cent independent farmers, and 0·001 per cent others (independent artisans, etc.; practically all professional men, such as doctors, lawyers, etc., are employees). The virtual absence of private enterprise and the almost complete socialisation are also reflected in the ownership of fixed capital assets (excluding land). In the 'productive sphere' 89 per cent of the basic funds were owned by state enterprises in 1964, 11 per cent by collectives, and less than 0·5 per cent by private enterprises. In the 'non-productive' sphere private ownership of basic funds was 20 per cent, most of it represented by privately owned houses. In 1948–64 the number of 'persons working in the national economy' (probably excluding armed forces, etc.) went up almost 17 per cent (in industry and construction 56 per cent). National employment thus increased faster than total population (14·3 per cent) and much faster than population in the productive age (4·6 per cent). There are no labour reserves left in Czechoslovakia.

TABLE 1

1948 = 100

	1961	1962	1963	1964
National income produced (Marxian definition)	268	272	266	268
of which in industry	286	303	295	302
construction	448	425	359	391
agriculture	108	89	103	96
Material personal consumption (including consumption by private enterprises, etc.)	207	212	215	220
Material consumption of institutions (Government, etc.)	251	263	273	297
Accumulation	807	747	540	516
Gross fixed investments, excluding capital repairs	511	498	443	495
Basic funds, replacement value (existing fixed capital stock, gross of depreciation) in the productive sphere	201	215	228	243
of which machinery and equipment	331	360	386	420
in housing	146	152	157	163

National income, consumption and accumulation indices are based on figures at constant prices of 24 April 1960; gross investment index on figures at constant prices of 1963; basic funds indices on figures at 1955 prices. Because of the different price bases and other peculiarities of Czechoslovak statistics, the three groups of index numbers should be compared with caution.

The approximative trends in the aggregate output and consumption of material goods, accumulation,[6] gross fixed investment, and fixed capital stock can be found in Table 1. The claim that national income increased almost 2·7 times in 1948–64 cannot be taken at its face value, but it is reasonably accurate that net output of material goods increased substan-

[6] Accumulation is 'that part of the distributed income which enlarges the national wealth in the form of increased basic funds, plus the change in unfinished construction, inventories, and reserves'. Distributed income is obtained by adding imports of material goods to, and subtracting exports and losses from, the income produced. The losses concerned are probably just a net foreign trade subsidy.

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tially, especially in industry and construction, whereas the net output of agricultural products did not increase at all, and probably decreased over the seventeen years under consideration. By the same token, the claim that personal consumption more than doubled in real terms cannot be taken too seriously; the considerable increase in the personal consumption of material goods remained one-fourth below output, whereas accumulation increased almost twice as fast (in 1958–61 three times as fast) as material output. In 1962–64 this trend was reversed.[7] This is the reason why the situation of Czechoslovak consumers has slightly improved in recent years in spite of the drop of national income in 1963 and the subsequent stagnation. The other side of the coin is, of course, that in view of the somewhat reduced rate of accumulation the rate of growth of national income in the years to come is unlikely to be maintained or increased unless the efficiency of the national economy is substantially improved. It is of interest to note—in spite of very severe limitations of comparability—that the increase in gross fixed investments still tended to lag behind increases in accumulation. Yet Czechoslovak economists have repeatedly criticised the widening gap between gross and net investment. Obviously, the portion of accumulation spent on financing net investment has been falling and the portion spent on (largely unwanted) accumulation of inventories has been increasing. The fast increase in the stock of machines in relation to (not quite comparable) output supports recent official complaints about the rapidly falling productive effect of machines. This is the unfortunate result of neglected modernisation (most investments have been widening and not deepening),[8] of the poor quality of some of the new machines, and especially of allocations of machines to relatively unproductive uses. The stock of housing at replacement value, unadjusted for depreciation, lags notably behind the increase in total fixed capital. In terms of net value, there has been hardly any improvement. A severe shortage of housing is one of the main frustrations of Czechoslovak consumers.

This is the official picture of output increases in industry in 1948–64: power plants 4·7 times; fuel, including coal products and crude oil, 3 times; ferrous metals 4·5 times; machinery and metal products 8·2 times; chemical and rubber products 8·6 times; textiles 2·6 times, etc. The validity of these gross value index numbers is extremely questionable, but there is no doubt about the impressive gains in some lines of output, especially in heavy industry.

ESPECIALLY serious is the present situation in agriculture and foreign trade. Agriculture has been collectivised in Czechoslovakia to a greater extent than in many other East European countries.[9]

[7] According to preliminary reports, accumulation in 1965 may have increased again as fast as, or faster than, personal consumption.

[8] An example of outdated technology is the 65 per cent share of steam traction in the total of freight train kilometres covered by Czechoslovak railways in 1964.

[9] At the end of 1964 the share of the 'socialist sector' in total arable land was 92·9 per cent; the share of state farms was 19·4 per cent, of collectives 65·5 per cent (of

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The 47 per cent decrease in persons working in agriculture in 1948–64 is not dramatically different from the trend in some developed western countries, but it has been accompanied by a great increase in the average age of agricultural workers.[10] On the other hand, material inputs into agriculture (concentrated almost exclusively in state farms and the collectives) shot up.[11] Nevertheless, net output has not increased at all and vegetable output has fallen below the 1948 and the pre-war levels. This was due to a reduction in the area sown and to the disappointing yields per hectare.[12] Czechoslovakia has to import increasing quantities of food, especially of grain.

There are two main difficulties in the field of foreign trade. One is the accumulation of trade surpluses with areas of mostly non-convertible currencies, while deficits continue to exist in trade with the 'developed capitalist countries', as shown in Table 2. Czechoslovakia is terribly short of gold and hard currency reserves.

TABLE 2

FOREIGN TRADE

CUMULATIVE FIGURES 1960–64, IN MILLIARD CROWNS

	Visible exports, free Czechoslovak border	Visible imports, free border of the supplying country	Balance
Socialist countries	59·2	54·4	4·8
of which USSR	29·6	27·5	2·1
Developed capitalist countries	13·1	14·2	−1·1
of which Britain	1·7	2·6	−0·9
West Germany	2·6	2·1	0·5
Developing non-socialist countries	8·3	7·0	1·3
Total	80·6	75·6	5·0

The other difficulty is the great discrepancy between higher domestic wholesale prices and lower world market prices of Czechoslovak exportables at the official exchange rate, so that exports must be heavily subsidised. The relatively small gain from the difference

which 6 per cent represented the private plots of members), etc. In contrast to the USSR, MTS stations have not been abolished in Czechoslovakia.

10 Due mainly to the inability of collectives to attract young workers. In March 1961 the average age of workers in the collectives was 45·8 years, compared to 44·8 for agriculture as a whole and 36·3 for industry.

11 The number of tractors in agriculture, reduced to 15 HP units, went up from 26,000 in 1950 to 164,000 in 1964. Use of commercial fertilisers increased in 1948–64 as follows: N (nitrogen content of nitrogenous fertilisers), 5 to 32 kg. per hectare; P_2O_5 (phosphorus content of phosphates), 8 to 36 kg.; K_2O (potassium content of potassium fertilisers), 6 to 48 kg.

12 Sown area fell from 5.3 million hectares in 1948 to 5.1 million in 1964. In 1963–64 the wheat yield was only 37 per cent above 1934–38 (in the UK 74, in USA 99, in Austria 55 per cent). The yield of barley was only 30 per cent above the pre-war average (in the UK 72, USA 69, Austria 53 per cent). Post-war Czechoslovak data probably refer to biological yields; if adjusted for harvest losses, yields would probably lag even more behind the western trends.

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between the lower foreign and the higher domestic wholesale price of importables does not by a long way compensate for the loss from exports. An indication of the existence of a substantial net subsidy of foreign trade can be found in the difference between 'income produced' and 'income distributed'. Even if adjusted for the balance of visible trade (at foreign trade prices and at the official exchange rate), the income distributed remained below the income produced in 1962 by 2·8 milliards crowns, in 1963 by 5·0 milliard, and in 1964 by 3·5 milliard.[18]

Finally, a few words about income distribution. Income from property and from profits of the remaining one-man enterprises is insignificant. Distribution of money earnings, before tax, is shown in Table 3.

TABLE 3

DISTRIBUTION OF WAGE AND SALARY INCOMES IN THE SOCIALIST SECTOR IN 1964, INCLUDING OVERTIME PAY, BEFORE TAX

	Monthly earnings in crowns						
	Less than 600	601 to 1,000	1,001 to 1,400	1,401 to 1,800	1,801 to 2,500	2,501 to 3,500	over 3,500
Per cent of workers	0·3	12·9	31·6	28·4	21·8	4·5	0·5

Excluded from the above statistics are employees who in May 1964 worked less than 180 hours a month (in mining and in other exceptional cases, where the legal working time is less than 46 hours per week, less than 160 hours). Also excluded are incomes of members of agricultural collectives. The number of wage and salary earners outside the socialist sector is negligible.

The wage tax is low and rather unprogressive so that after-tax distribution of earnings is not very different. Distribution of all money incomes may be a little more unequal because of some extremely low old-age pensions, while other pensions are relatively high. On the other hand, important free social services tend to equalise the real incomes. On the whole, while the average personal income in terms of purchasing power seems to lag noticeably behind the average personal income in other countries with similar industrial status, the income distribution is probably more equal in Czechoslovakia than in most other countries. Recently, the levelling-off ('nivelizace') of wages and the 'lack of their economic justification' (lower pay for work requiring skill, previous training, and responsibility and higher pay for some unskilled work) have been much criticised in the official Czechoslovak communist papers.

THE new economic model shows in many respects the unmistakable parentage of neo-classical economics. It is based—with some exceptions—on the assumption that the material interest of individual

[18] The difficult question is how to convert trade surplus at world market prices into domestic prices. If the crown is overvalued the subtraction of the surplus at the official exchange rate from income produced would yield an overestimation of the net subsidy of foreign trade. But the surplus comes from trade with currency areas vis-à-vis which the crown may not be overvalued. If domestic wholesale prices were brought up to cost under the usual western definition, the net foreign trade subsidy would appear greater than the above figures suggest.

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consumers and enterprises can be brought in line with the interests of society as a whole by using competitive markets, and that decentralised economic decisions do not create 'elementary, chaotic situations', but on the contrary can provide efficient solutions if appropriate prices are used as signals between suppliers and buyers.

Since the publication of the Draft Principles in October 1964, some qualifications have been added to the principle of organising productive forces through the market. Certain areas in which a substantial amount of central planning is supposed to be maintained have been more clearly defined, as the model began to be translated into legal norms, of which the government decree on the Planned Management of the National Economy, 25 August 1965, is the most important.[14] Furthermore, it is now being emphasised that the new system will not simply be 'introduced' in 1966, but that it is a long-term target which can be achieved only by a difficult economic, political, and social process. Nevertheless, the basic principle of a decentralised socialist market economy emerges clearly even from the 'Theses' prepared for the forthcoming congress of the Communist Party.[15] These state, *inter alia*:

> The personal interest of the workers must be linked closely to the outcome of economic activity of the enterprise; a substantial part of the reward for work will depend on the efficiency and profitability of the enterprise. First steps in this direction must be taken through measures leading to a flexible price system under which goods are exchanged according to their values and the supply is brought into continuous equilibrium with the market demand. . . . Scientifically planned management can be enhanced by unequivocal respect for economic interdependences and criteria at all levels of management. In the field of investment especially, every decision must be based on calculations of the efficiency of, and the returns on, the social means expended. In the field of external economic relations, too, criteria of efficiency and of the contribution of foreign trade to our national income are of the highest priority. . . . It is necessary to interest our trade and production enterprises in the economic results of foreign trade and to use the pressure of world market prices on our production. . . . In the past an excessive number of partial plan indicators was administratively substituted for the market. This has proved to be an inadequate solution. . . . The market must be used for the better satisfaction of the needs of individuals as well as of the whole society, and for making practical decisions concerning the development of individual enterprises and of the whole economy. It is the basic duty of the trade and production organisations, and in their true self-interest, to recognise the demand situation, to make flexible adjustments to it, and to encourage demand by the introduction of new products and of products of better quality. To this

[14] *Collection of Laws of the Czechoslovak Socialist Republic*, No. 90, 1965.
[15] Special supplement to *Rude Pravo*, 23 December 1965.

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end, competition among the socialist enterprises, and progressively also competition from imports, should be used.

Like any other model of competitive market equilibrium, the proposed Czechoslovak system is basically a quest for static efficiency. Such a static optimum is approached only if a sufficient amount of competition (a) forces enterprises to minimise cost by making the most efficient use of inputs and modern technology; (b) prevents them from reducing money cost simply by pushing down the price of inputs through the exercise of their monopsonistic or political power; (c) prevents them from maximising profit (or 'gross income', as discussed below) simply by pushing up the price of products through the exercise of their monopolistic power. The authors of the model probably realise that in Czechoslovakia today 'workable competition' exists even less than in the West. To fight monopolistic price increases by competition from imports is impossible, given the shortage of hard currencies.

There are two other ways of checking monopolistic or monopsonistic tendencies. One is to increase charges on the 'gross incomes' of enterprises in case of 'an undesirable development of wages or an unjustified price increase'.[16] The other one is direct price control.[17] Widespread use of both these methods would conflict, of course, with the efficiency principle and the self-adjusting mechanism of the market. Furthermore, there are various ways in which profit-maximising enterprises may escape both price control and the pressure of competition, e.g. by differentiating their products.

Even if a reasonable competitive solution could be achieved, other problems and conflicts of objectives will remain. Enterprises usually try to maximise short-term profits or 'gross incomes'. Once they started to work according to the new principles, they switched rapidly from above-optimum to below-optimum inventories. The model tries to correct the unduly short time-horizon of decentralised decisions, especially in the field of fixed investments. A substantial part of them will be centrally planned and financed. But over-centralisation of investment may conflict with the allocational function of the market. The famous conflict between static efficiency and the Keynesian full employment theory is of no immediate importance: if unemployment is looming in Czechoslovakia, it is not because of lack of aggregate demand; it is rather of the frictional, technological, and cost-push type. In any case, the authors of the model seem to be impressed by the fairly successful combination of full employment policies on Keynesian lines with more or less competitive markets in the developed capitalist countries.[18] Somewhat more important will be the problem

[16] Decree No. 90, 1965, § 34.

[17] There are four categories of prices: fixed prices, intended mainly for basic raw materials and some services; prices with an upper limit, intended mainly for heavy investment goods; prices with an upper and a lower limit, intended for light machines and tools, some chemicals, building materials, etc.; and free prices, mainly for consumer goods and new products.

[18] Keynes' *General Theory* was published in Czech last year.

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of external diseconomies and economies which will not be reflected in the cost and gross incomes of enterprises. And last, the efficiency principle tends to conflict with a socially acceptable distribution of income. This clash of objectives can be mitigated by appropriate tax and public expenditure policies. The authors of the model seem to realise this possibility as well as its limits.[19] Income distribution is likely to become more unequal in Czechoslovakia.

IN spite of all these problems, it is quite rational at the present stage to give high priority to the objective of an improved static efficiency. But the new model is not quite consistent in this respect. It would take us too far to try to outline all its aspects and inconsistencies. I shall comment briefly only on the concept of 'gross income' and on the proposed rate of interest on fixed capital.

'Gross income' is obtained by subtracting from the gross revenue of enterprises (receipts from sales, adjusted for changes in unfinished production, plus price subsidies) the turnover tax, cost of materials, energy, semi-products and services purchased from other enterprises, and depreciation charges. 'Gross income' comes therefore close to the concept of value added. The enterprise has to pay out of its gross income a charge on basic funds (interest on fixed capital), other interest due, social security contributions, and a special charge on gross income (similar to tax on value added). The residual is allocated to various funds of the enterprise, especially the workers' fund (wage fund). The substitution of 'gross income' for profit[20] as the function to be maximised probably reflects the reasoning that wages are not 'cost' to be minimised, but a part of national income. So they are; but if there is full employment and if the enterprises cannot depress wages below equilibrium level, money wages tend to reflect the real labour cost, the amount of which should be minimised. Furthermore, the 'gross income' concept might make it easy to translate an economically unjustified wage increase into a price increase. Such a cost-push inflation, if partly checked by monetary measures, tends to create unemployment; the recent severe inflation and rising unemployment in Yugoslavia may serve as a warning. It remains to be seen whether the proposed complex system of taxation of gross incomes will counteract these tendencies.

The interest on fixed capital assets will be in principle 6 per cent per annum, but on assets in enterprises providing services only 3 per cent, and on assets for educational purposes, assets to purify the water and the air, and on all assets for the protection of the health of the workers, it will be zero per cent. It may prove difficult in practice to draw a line between the high, medium, and zero charge categories of

[19] The 'Theses' stated: 'The enforcement of an economically justified reward for work will lead to a substantial increase in responsibility and working morale. . . . It is necessary to make a strict distinction between the tools of social policy and the rewards for work'.

[20] Certain enterprises maximise profits and pay charges on profits.

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basic funds. There will be other cases of discrimination on the one hand, and probably an insufficient differentiation of interest rates according to economic criteria on the other. With such an artificial structure of interest rates, the interest on fixed capital will not serve too well as a roughly correct size of mesh in the sieve through which relatively unproductive capital projects are supposed to fall.

But all the weaknesses of the new system are relatively unimportant in comparison with the paramount difficulties of its application. These have been summarised by Professor Reznicek as follows[21]: 1. There is an excess of demand over supply in all important sectors—investment, labour, basic materials, consumer goods. 2. Production is monopolised, buyers do not have a real choice of supplier. 3. Most serious is the problem of 'subjectively' fixed prices which are not going to be regulated by the market because of the extremely limited application of free prices.[22] A general revision of the pattern of wholesale prices can be expected only in January 1968. Mainly because of distorted prices, the 'rentability' (that is, profit as a percentage of 'own cost' of production) of products varies from +50 to −20 per cent. 4. Shortcomings in the price system also make 'objective' charges on the gross income of enterprises impossible. The workers' (labour reward) fund of the enterprises experimenting with the new system varied from 200 to 1,500 crowns per worker. Enterprises which had raised their efficiency before the introduction of the new system have been at a disadvantage relative to those which did so more recently. 5. Long-term charges on gross income will not be known until mid-1966; because of the uncertainty about the rates of charges, enterprises are reluctant to 'discover reserves'. 6. The way of thinking of socialist managers will not change overnight.

A market economy performs best in fair weather—with no need for great changes in the structure of output or prices, with no potentially destabilising expectations of great economic changes to come, and under stable monetary and employment conditions. The present situation in Czechoslovakia is just the opposite of this: patterns of output, prices, and demand are in an almost explosive disequilibrium; there is an excess of purchasing power (suppressed inflation); the propensity to save has been undermined by the two post-war currency reforms involving the confiscation of a great part of private savings; working morale is not very good; and destabilising speculation may be running high. One of the dilemmas of market socialism in Czechoslovakia is that it has to be introduced in rough economic weather. Much will depend, of course, on the actual economic policy, on Czechoslovakia's ability to obtain foreign credits, and on the human element. But before the benefits of the new system will be fully felt (greater choice and

[21] *Rude Pravo*, 22 December 1965.

[22] According to F. Hronec (*Praca*, Bratislava, 9 November 1965), in 1966 fixed prices will cover 64 per cent, limited prices 29 per cent, and free prices only 7 per cent of total production.

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better quality of goods and services, higher real personal incomes, and a rise in the net national product, achieved at lower capital-output and labour-output ratios), some economic drawbacks may come to the fore (rising prices, unemployment, and a host of at least temporarily painful adjustments).

(*Unless stated otherwise, all statistical data are from* Statisticka rocenka CSSR 1965 (*Prague, 1965*). *The author acknowledges gratefully a grant-in-aid from the State University of New York.*)

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SLAVIC REVIEW

American Quarterly of Soviet and East European Studies

Volume XXIV, Number 4 December 1965

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The *Slavic Review* is published by the American Association for the Advancement of Slavic Studies and is sent to all Association members. Subscriptions without membership are $12.00 a year. Single numbers are $3.25.

For membership and subscriptions, apply to the Secretary of the Association, 1207 West Oregon Street, University of Illinois, Urbana, Illinois.

Editorial office: 409 West 117 Street, Columbia University, New York, New York 10027.

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SOVIET PAINTING

Old Traditions and New Painters

Jacques Catteau

ISOLATED, exclusively enclosed within the socialist world and churlishly ignored by a contemptuous western world, such is essentially the position of Soviet painting. And on both sides many factors concur to reinforce this isolation.

Within the Soviet Union both painters and public, unless they are a prey to intellectual anarchism and morbid curiosity, are totally uninterested in the decadent bourgeois art which they long ago condemned without appeal. The French Exhibition of 1961 in Moscow provoked, as regards its paintings, a regular outcry in the Soviet press, which went so far as to give lectures to artists like Picasso and Pignon, whose politics are well known, on their duty to France. Abstract art —and in the USSR the word 'abstract' means everything which is not a photographic likeness—appears to the majority as 'delirium', 'the disfiguring of human beauty', 'pathological nausea', and 'treachery to the nation'. There has been no art in France, we are told, since the beginning of the century; and abstract painting is incessantly castigated with a naïve violence of which the satirical review *Krokodil* gives the measure. It systematically associates abstract art with religion and with the gutter: here is the *stiliaga*, or Teddy Boy, daubing his canvas, and there the religious cretin on his knees. . . . In a word, when the Soviet world is faced with anything culturally exotic it reacts as though in violent defence against a foreign body.

In western artistic circles, socialist-realism has long since been judged and condemned; sometimes for political and sometimes for aesthetic reasons: namely, that it has not yet produced any works of art. . . . The West is interested in Soviet painters only when they show rebellious symptoms and refuse to follow the herd. Anything officially patronised by the Russian government excites no more than cautious curiosity and prudent reserve. Thus at the highly official exhibition of Soviet painting in Paris, June-July 1965, the press looked down its nose and mumbled some clichés about 'non-academic' and 'living' art —which reveals a lot about its opinion of Soviet painting; and yet the pictures on show were not without interest, even though they did represent a return to 1910, fifty years behind the times. The paintings had been selected by two French envoys to Moscow, quite certainly from among those which had no chance of being retained by the Soviet Academy. This effort on the part of the Russians passed without appreciation; and yet, if doors need to be opened, ought there not to be, on both sides, a profound readiness to acknowledge the least gesture in that direction?

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Because for the time being the wall still stands—a blind, massive wall—between the two aesthetic camps; and there is no point in breaking one's head against it. Although the political thaw between west and east has made possible a certain confrontation of ideas and works —though exclusively, be it noted, for external use—the opposition is none the less irreducible, and will be for a long time yet. Hopes are on the increase, but it is not all at once that minds can be swept free of a world which has been organised, and aesthetically organised, for fifty years. To grasp all the significance of the young school of painting in Russia one must seek far in the past for the reason for that seclusion, that closure of Soviet art against external influences, before one can understand the full importance of the least little opening in that domain. Fully to appreciate a chink in a door, one needs first to have contemplated its locks and bolts and seen them, one by one, made fast.

IN the early years of this century there was an extraordinary efflorescence of painting in Russia, which was, indeed, simply one aspect of the astonishing intellectual ferment which preceded the revolution. A swarm of schools and tendencies was proliferating in Moscow and St. Petersburg at the same time that Diaghilev's Russian ballets were revealing to Europe the painters Benois, Roerich, Bakst, Goncharova, and Larionov, while Yavlensky and Kandinsky were trying to bring a new art to birth at Munich and later in Switzerland, and Chagall was 'washing his eyes', as he put it, in Paris before returning to Russia to be mobilised. There was a flood of '-isms', grateful to Lissitsky, who wrote a history of them, but hateful to Lenin, for whom—in painting—they were inadmissible: the *rayonnisme* of Larionov and Goncharova, the suprematism of Malevich, the constructivism of Tatlin, the non-objectivism of Rodchenko . . . The whole of art was fusing together in '-isms'; Mayakovsky's futurism and Meyerhold's bio-mechanism were the counterparts in poetry and the theatre of this continuous proliferating upsurge in painting, with its intense concentration upon research. The ever-multiplying groups and exhibitions bequeathed to the history of art some memorable names: 'The Blue Rose', the 'Knave of Diamonds', 'The Diamond Dagger', 'The Donkey's Tail', etc.[1] Out of all these manifestos and researches there came some very fine canvases, now hidden away in the vaults of Russia's museums —obscure and secluded witnesses of a brilliant epic. In the vaults of the Tretyakov gallery, to take one example, the niggardly beam of an electric bulb reveals to our dazzled eyes some canvases of Chagall, Kandinsky, Malevich (a reaper, of 1909; a woman in a boat, of 1915; an abstract portrait, of 1932), Goncharova (peacocks), Larionov (a *rayonniste* cock), Tatlin (a fisherman, of 1913), a group of works amounting to a veritable treasure, which is further enhanced by some excellent canvases of Udaltsova, Rozanova, Kanchalovsky (of the period when he

[1] For a full picture of these movements, see Camilla Gray, *The Great Experiment: Russian Art, 1863–1922* (London, 1962).

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admired Cézanne), Lentulov, Popova, and also that admirable Georgian painter, Pirosmanishvili, whose art is close to that of the Douanier Rousseau.

These artists wanted, like Mayakovsky who loudly proclaimed it, to break with the past, destroy the old forms, and prepare the arrival of a modern art and a modern aesthetic. Who says revolution says equally rupture with the past, the rolling away of a world that has crumbled. Therefore the painters welcomed the 1917 revolution with enthusiasm, confidence, and joy. Freedom at last! They were free in what they created and in the choice of forms and possibilities. A rare and precious freedom! For in the bourgeois West, although the fury of the surrealists—provoking scandal and crying to heaven for the same freedom—had shocked the old world, it had not broken its resistance. But in Russia it was a happy age, and big with hopes. In his letter, 'Kunstfrühling in Russland', which appeared on 22 February 1919, Kandinsky described with passion the vitality of the arts and of the new measures for popular culture. Apart from the material difficulties which spared nobody, the USSR was at that time a paradise for artists; and they felt it all the more strongly because they were convinced that they had been ahead of the revolution. Malevich wrote that cubism and futurism were the revolutionary forms in art which had prefigured the revolution in political and economic life; and art, which had been its presage, inspired bright hopes in the accomplished revolution. There was a moment when this union between the revolution and avant-garde art was symbolised in Lunarcharsky. Thanks to him, artists of renown occupied key positions. Chagall, whom Lunarchasky had known in Paris in 1912, was appointed Commissar of Fine Arts for the government of Vitebsk. Having founded an Academy, of which he became director, he invited Lissitsky and Malevich as professors, and the latter was soon, unknown to Chagall, to introduce suprematism as the Academy's dominant trend. Kandinsky, for his part, began in 1918 to teach in the State art school; in the following year he founded the museum of pictorial art in Moscow; in 1920 he became professor at the University of Moscow, and in 1921 he founded the Academy of Art. Lissitsky also received a professorship, and he allied suprematism with constructivism in his 'Prouns'. I will not here attempt to describe in detail this fusion of art with the revolution; but in order to estimate the symbiosis in the 1920s between avant-garde art and the revolution it is sufficient to recall the impressive artistic manifestations, more especially at Petrograd under Altman's direction, which marked the revolution's first anniversary.

But on closer inspection this symbiosis was not a real one, or at least if it was, it was short-lived. Revolution and avant-garde art made use of one another in all sincerity, in all good faith, but without looking into the deeper aspects of the problem. Chagall has given, unintentionally, an interesting description of this mutually profitable dialectical alliance between the art of 1917 and the Soviet revolution. 'I wanted', he writes, 'to pursue this dream in the sky and on the earth of Vitebsk,

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and precisely in this revolutionary upsurge which seemed to me propitious for the blazing forth of a new art.' Without clearly realising it, what Chagall is seduced by is not the content of the revolution, its aspect as midwife to a Marxist world, but the 'revolutionary upsurge', the dynamic spirit of the revolution in accord with the forward-moving spirit of his own art. Art makes use of the revolution in so far as, being of the avant garde, it leaps from the past into the future, breaking the useless link of time. In this sense one could say that the artists of that period were 'fellow travellers' of the revolution, a term hitherto reserved for certain revolutionary writers who, though not themselves Marxists, were sympathetic to the Soviet regime. But to return to Chagall. He continues: 'I came back to Vitebsk on the eve of the first anniversary of the October Revolution. My town, like all the others, was preparing to celebrate, decorating the streets with huge posters. . . . All these house-painters, the bearded old men and their apprentices too, began to copy my cows and my horses. And on 25 October, all over the town, my multicoloured beasts, bulging with revolution, were floating above the streets. The communist chiefs seemed not quite pleased. Why is the cow green? And the horse, why is it flying through the air? Why? What has it to do with Marx and Lenin?' We see here, as clearly as possible, the will of the artist to serve the cause of the revolution, but we see equally clearly the revolution's profound ingratitude and incomprehension towards art, both in the matter of form and of subject. And Chagall bitterly draws this terse conclusion: 'We tried to bring Art into life, to adorn it; we decorated houses, trams, railway coaches. Then, little by little, the professors came back to their jobs. The innovators had to abandon their pupils. Art had come to nothing. Simply, a few people's hearts were broken.' The rebuff was final. How can it be explained?

ON the face of it, this rebuff appears strange. The Russian art of 1917 and the Soviet revolution had two points in common: the rupture with a shameful past, and the building of a new world. Mayakovsky was the greatest, and the most anguished, singer of this vocation of revolutionary art—a vocation which is false in its essence. The initial misunderstanding emerges clearly in about the years 1921–22, from the time when the revolution began effectively to pass from its destructive to its constructive phase. This misunderstanding between artists and revolutionaries occurs on two levels: the first being the role of art, and the second the attempt to find the definition of a proletarian art.

The fundamental question was the role of art. It is an eternal question, which raises the difficult problem of the nature of art. Without taking any position on the fundamental point—for I believe, in a word, that art is defined by the concrete work of art—I will confine myself to recalling the terms of the problem. Should art be committed? Is there any such thing as non-committed art? Revolutionaries give a ready and concrete answer: in *a revolutionary world*, art should be at the

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service of the revolution. It is a ruthless, precise, and at bottom a limited answer. In reality, it fails to account for all those forms of art which arose in primitive, feudal, and bourgeois societies; it admits them as art forms, but as archaic ones. And after all, this involves a contradiction: essential freedom is allowed for the art of the past, while the new art, on the contrary, may only serve one single cause. Which explains the following two-fold action by the Soviet government: on the one hand, from 1918 onward it issued decrees protecting Russia's artistic heritage and also its living artists, forbidding the export of works of art, nationalising museums and famous private collections such as the Shchukin, Morozov, Ostroukhov, and many others, increasing the number of museums, which rose from 87 in 1918 to 310 in 1921, and leading to the active restoration—in the following years—of frescos in churches of the old Russia. On the other hand, the Soviet government developed to the utmost the 'agitation art' which, with an urgency unknown to easel art, went down into the street to bedeck public squares, houses, and trains with banners, placards, and posters; and at the eighth Party Congress painting was officially enrolled, like cinema, theatre, and music, in the service of communist propaganda. But the real story was more complex; the party's position at that time was more theoretical than concrete, and avant-garde art still held the centre of the stage.

Very soon, however, there were artists who felt they were in a false position. For them, the work of art was an act of freedom, not a representation in aid of a cause; art was an independent world, not the reflection of a social and economic world. They refused to produce art to order and asserted as a principle the primacy of aesthetic emotion over subject. For them, it is not because of the political subject expressed that Delacroix's 'Barricade' and Goya's 'Horrors of War' are great works, but because of the rare quality of the artist's emotion. But what is the use of reviving old quarrels? In the revolutionary context, the party had its reasons. The country needed active revolutionaries above all, and then, later, technicians and constructors. The emergency over-ruled everything. And so—among those who took the road of exile, no longer needed, were Chagall, Kandinsky, Lissitsky, the brothers Pevsner. The spiritual aspect of art was effaced by the battle for bread. Victory had to come first.

There were other artists who had spontaneously felt this imperative and had given themselves, body and soul, to the service of the revolution. Nor should it be thought that they were of the realism school; they were convinced partisans of a new abstract art which, in their opinion at least, was proletarian art. This aspect was represented by the artists of 'Left Front'—the Lefortsy—and the constructivists, who were active principally in 'Proletcult', a quasi-official organisation which aimed at fostering a proletarian culture. Great hopes were raised by this extremely active association, in which, in the sphere of painting, Tatlin and Rodchenko were the moving spirits. According to its

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promoters, this proletarian art should break completely with the past, in order to create—and by laboratory methods—new houses, new streets, and new use objects for daily life. Studying this art and its realisations, one is inescapably reminded of industrial and functional art, and of American 'Op' art. This very modern and very interesting tendency found substantial defenders, in particular the Marxist Bogdanov who, in opposition to Lenin, championed the independence of cultural development, and Mayakovsky, whose extravagances frequently shocked and outraged common sense—had he not announced in 1928 his 'amnesty' for Rembrandt? Another difficulty, which derives from one of the eternal characteristics of art, was that this art was in advance of its time. Its utopianism, its excessively abstract insistence upon automatism, its scientific and inhuman aspect, the verbal extravagance associated with constructivism, all contributed to its undoing. There is an important significance in the Soviet critics' opinion of Proletcult: this organisation, they said, exhibited a *nihilist attitude towards the culture of the past.*

IT is from this angle that we approach the birth of Soviet realism. The formal irony is this, that in the single domain of art the politicians of the revolution refused to break with the past. And Soviet critics today present socialist-realism not as a *rupture* with the past but as a new *stage* of Russian art. They rely upon a simple formula: their culture is national in form and socialist in content. They thus recognise a certain permanence in forms and a halt in the evolution of form. Any formal research other than study of the great lessons of the past is labelled 'metaphysics', 'rationalistic scholasticism', 'alchemy', 'mysticism', or, quite recently, 'modernism'. For a Marxist, there is nothing extraordinary in this position. Karl Marx recognised durable values in the past, and Lenin himself had no hesitation, when he judged it necessary, in openly combating the futurist totalitarianism of 'Proletcult'; in October 1920 he wrote: 'Marxism has acquired world-wide importance as the ideology of the revolutionary proletariat just because, so far from rejecting the most precious achievements of the bourgeois period, it has, on the contrary, assimilated to itself, while transforming it, everything that was most precious in the more than two thousand years of development of human thought and culture.' The fact is that Lenin's official attitude, at least to begin with, was nicely balanced. His personal attitude, in art, was very conservative; and he frequently quoted the Russian proverb: 'Don't spit in the well, you may have need of its water'; but he was careful not to impose his views. He did, it is true, enter the arena against Proletcult, which claimed, with Lunacharsky's support, to represent proletarian art, but he made no formal condemnation of any particular art. In private, on the other hand, he made no secret of his vigorous opinions; and these opinions, although they were only personal and private confidences, were quickly established as Leninist precepts. Clara Zetkin quotes him

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as follows: 'We are too iconoclastic in painting. We ought to preserve beauty and take it for our model, even though it is "old". Why should we turn away from what is truly beautiful and reject is as the starting-point for development, simply because it is "old"? Why must we bow down to what is new as a god to whom we have to submit, because it is new? It is pure nonsense! And there's a lot of humbug in it, and also of course an unconscious reverence for the prevailing artistic fashion of the West. . . . I cannot consider the productions of expressionism, futurism, cubism and other "-isms" as the highest expression of artistic genius.' [2]

Like Lenin, the politicians were at bottom very little concerned about the renovation of the means of expression; they thought it neither necessary nor urgent. They desired only one thing: that art should be 'understood and loved by the working masses'. So there soon developed an offensive against avant-garde art. Proletcult was accused of 'komchvanstvo', a neologism signifying 'communist arrogance' and referring to the organisation's totalitarian and falsely proletarian ambition. Further, in a resolution of 18 June 1925, two essential points were laid down by the party: the *technical achievements of former art* must be exploited by the revolution's artists, and an art-form *accessible to the popular masses* must be developed. The only art which met these two conditions, and more especially the second, was the polished naturalism of Repin, Surikov, Serov, and Grekov—a naturalism with conventional ideals, the Antique and the Cinquecento, which had already penetrated the Russian sensibility in the late nineteenth century. This policy had immediate practical repercussions: there was an attempt to revive the old nineteenth-century group of the 'Peredvizhniki'—the Wanderers—but this revealing effort of re-grouping collapsed. After which, upon the debris of this old organisation the Artists' Association of Revolutionary Russia, the AKhRR, was created. The form of expression was defined by imperative reference to the past and the subject was dictated by heroic communism; life in the Red Army, the life of worker and peasant in the revolution, the life of the Heroes of Labour. . . . The transition was attempted from naturalism to a socialist-realism which was as yet undefined. The results were not very convincing, the less so because the champions of avant-garde art were still in arms, a last flicker of experimental art from the already distant years of the Revolution. In addition to the condemned Proletcult, other associations came and went: the 'new society of painters', of primitivist tendency, the 'Makovets', of symbolist tendency, and 'the Moscow Painters', which brought together the former nucleus of the 'Knave of Diamonds', Kanchalovsky, Lentulov, Falk, etc., the 'Four Arts', which included, though without bringing them close to one another, Kuznetsov, Malevich, and Sarian. Meanwhile the offensive launched in 1925 was continued; the AKhRR

[2] Lenin, *Culture and Art* (Moscow, 1959), p. 520.

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was transformed into a federation of unions of Soviet painters, and finally, in 1931, into the Russian Association of Proletarian Painters, or RAPKh. But the movement launched by Proletcult was not extinct, and Proletcult itself began to make sociological studies dealing with cubism, expressionism, formalism; it rejected more and more peremptorily the art of the past, and at the same time its taste for administrative measures became a mania. In 1932 the party took the reins into its hands and reorganised the literary, artistic, and scientific associations.

IT was the end of the road. In painting, the subject became supreme at the expense of quality. To tell a story, rather than to tell it well, was the imperative. After heroic realism came the realism of the construction of socialism, in which Soviet man filled the centre of the stage, and finally, during the last war, there came patriotic realism, bombastically lyrical and atrociously tragic.

Nevertheless, socialist-realism can embrace a great variety of subjects, and it often handles portraits, landscapes, and interiors in such a way that they can only be connected with the theory through a sort of trick, by means of their titles. Indeed, there are so many subjects, or rather there are so many subjects that can be included in socialist-realism, that the mind of the public has come, little by little, to sense obscurely that in the last analysis the only criterion of socialist realism is the *form*, an easy form to grasp because it reflects the external reality without noticeable deformation. And yet Lunarcharsky had tried to warn Soviet art of the danger: 'The painter is not a mirror; he is a creator, he ought to give back to the world his own image transfigured in the crucible of the thinker and the poet. . . . It practically never happens!' So we are presented in fact with a real paradox: the primacy of subject is asserted, no doubt, and yet form retains its ascendancy. It is never for its subject, but for its form, that the Soviet public condemns a 'modernist' picture. At the 1961 French exhibition in Moscow, Pignon's canvas 'The dead workman' was unanimously condemned: the workman couldn't be 'seen'. A social subject was condemned on account of its form. This atrophy of the power to 'see' is striking. The average Soviet citizen cannot even get the hang of an expressionist picture which would be clearly obvious to anyone else. One is surprised to find that socialist-realism, which was born of reaction against formalism, has engendered its own formalism, of a sterilising kind.

Since 1932, Soviet society has settled down to this state of affairs, and the problem of art, cramped within its formal restrictions, has made little progress. So far as possible, the *de facto* conditions have been codified, and the resulting characteristics of Soviet culture, which means also its painting, have been accurately defined by Laura Conti [3]: a certain lethargy of evolution, arrested at the forms already elaborated

[3] *Les temps modernes*, October 1963: 'Les conditions du développement culturel en Union Soviétique'.

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by capitalist society; inertia, involving the consideration of cultural problems from the general angle of culture and not from the particular angles of the various cultural domains; a definition of culture which makes it, not a phenomenon of elites, but a collective heritage of knowledge and behaviour. Laura Conti very aptly emphasises the Marxist concept of 'historic need' and 'fundamental need', and goes on to observe that the satisfaction of 'fundamental' needs is unquestionably dynamic in the world of Soviet culture, whereas the creation and satisfaction of 'historic' needs has remained notably static. This formulation of the evidence usefully emphasises the gravity of such a 'cultural situation', and would seem to preclude any revival of art for a long time to come.

In the course of the dispute, a highly characteristic book was published,[4] *Against Contemporary Abstractionism and Formalism*, a collection of polemical articles written by convinced partisans of socialist-realism, with a tough, violent, and sectarian introduction, is a kind of 'boundless anti-realism'. It does however enable us to draw two important conclusions, not so much about the substance of the argument, which remains unchanged, but about the new dimensions it has assumed.

First, the Russian critics are appealing to the outside world. Do they feel isolated, or not up to their job? Three Germans, two Hungarians, a Bulgarian, a Rumanian, and three Englishmen come to the support of their Soviet comrades. Thus the struggle has crossed the frontiers of the USSR and become international. Like the Marxists who stand for a broader and more open art, the champions of socialist-realism—as now defined in Russia—are calling up their forces to find out their strength.

On the other hand Professor Baskin (who of course provides an abundance of quotations from Marx, Engels, Lenin, and the eternal Clara Zetkin) seems to find these official backers inadequate for his purpose, and makes long excursions into history. Bundling everything ludicrously together, and shamelessly mutilating a reality that is complex and far from monolithic, Baskin takes stock of the two opposing forces. On the one side, bourgeois ideology, with St Augustine and charisma, Freud and sexualism, Jacques Maritain, Jaspers, Heidegger, Gabriel Marcel and existentialism, the sanctification of individualism, Kafka and the absurd, Tristan Tzara and his famous 'Let us spit on humanity', Salvadore Dali and his paranoia, Nietzsche and the superhuman, T. S. Eliot with his theory of the genius isolated from the masses, and, in painting, the highly-coloured 'mysticism' of the abstractionists. On the other side the ordered ranks of the defenders of 'art for the people'. Democritus takes the lead, followed by Aristotle, Voltaire, Rousseau, Diderot, Herder, Lessing, Schiller, Belinsky, Herzen, Chernyshevsky, Dobroliubov, and, for the painters, Surikov and Repin.

[4] *Protiv Sovremennovo abstraktsionizma i Formalizma.* A collection of translations edited by Prof. M. P. Baskin (Moscow, 1964).

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The heroes and heralds are here marshalled not in space but in time, no longer in the living world but in history. The ideological confrontation has taken on a purely philosophical character, universal and outside the bounds of time. This reflects both the force of a controversy which calls on the aid of the philosophical substratum of a whole society, and at the same time its weakness, since art—let me say it again—is not merely pure idea, but also technique and above all concrete creation.

But men always and everywhere, and especially artists, evade the theories into which we try to fit them and strike out obstinately, and sometimes naïvely, for some new way. And in the Soviet Union there are painters who are trying to escape from the tunnel of formalism into which socialist-realism has herded them.

THIS aspiration is an eternal sign of the artist. In his novel *Moscow doesn't trust to tears*, written in 1932, that fatal year for the freedom of art, Ehrenburg introduces a Soviet painter who had fought in the Civil War. In a Moscow newspaper he reads a review signed with the initials O.B., of an exhibition of painting: 'Chuzhakov's landscapes show that he has definitely lost contact with the masses. It is art typical of the declassed renegade, and will appeal only to some ten or twenty bourgeois bohemian degenerates.' The artist reflects, and Ehrenburg adds that 'his thoughts were those of the author':

> To ten or twenty. Let's admit that it is so. And AKhRR—to ten thousand? So one ought to be doing potboilers? But take, say, Rembrandt—how many people admired his work in his lifetime? Yet today excursion groups are shepherded to see his pictures: stop and be enlightened. Citizen O.B. . . . you don't paint pictures—it's an outdated business—and in point of fact you can't give pleasure to anyone. . . . Let's listen to the siskins. They sing like degenerates. Would you say they'd lost contact with the masses? And what about vocal cords? You see, O.B., they sing because they like singing. It's gayer for them and for me, nobody needs listen who doesn't wish to. . . . If you, O.B., have worked out that my pictures aren't wanted, all right, I could whitewash walls, for instance. . . . Fools think: twice two, a beefsteak for everybody, and to hell with the arts. But that's just where art will begin—after the beefsteak, and then it'll get its teeth into not four, my dear chap, but five. Or twenty-five. An O.B. may understand nothing about painting, there may be hundreds, even millions of O.B.s—well, I'll have to lay down my paint brushes, that's all. I'll find myself another job to suit the times. We'll manage to live without pictures. But ten years will pass. Well, perhaps not ten—a hundred. What's the difference? Then they'll understand.[5]

This painter's hopes will not have been in vain. There have appeared in Russia some young painters who are attacking the problems of form with a significant zest. Not that they set up a form of expression

[5] Ilya Ehrenburg, *Men, Years, Life*, vol. 3 (London, 1963), p. 209.

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opposed to that of socialist-realism; but they broaden the problem and rediscover America, namely, the multiplicity of expressive forms. They do not rush headlong into battle like their Polish confrères, who were longer in contact with the West, but they strive to find a way with forms proper to themselves, and proper to the Russian genius, which they want to rediscover in new images.

This revival of painting, still very new, still confined to a few tiny groups and a few individuals, and still exposed to official hostility, is not exempt from naivety. For example, a painter showed me one day some pictures of Elbruz, a peak in the Caucasus, of which the first was impressionist in manner, the second fauvist, the third cubist, the fourth abstract, and so on. This craving to return to the recent past is not a sign of conservatism; it represents the need to retrace a temporarily abandoned path. Behind the nostalgia there are profound talents striving to re-create and even create *their own* movements in painting, out of their own sensibility. Four painters may illustrate this revival, four among many others who are unknown and who will one day be revealed.

BALD, thick-necked, hair crew-cut, his eyes behind heavy glasses anxious about what you may say, Kropovnitsky stands squarely planted on his feet, holding his canvases and recounting the story of his work. Starting with abstractions, he laid out areas of cool tints to form radiant but cold and rigorously intellectual compositions. His next development was sequences of strange, tapering, airy forms like clouds seen in section, and this was soon followed by heavy rough-angled blocks like piles of quarry-stones. With that, Kropovnitsky returned to matter, to make it sing: the facets of mineral surfaces, starry coruscations, tangible forms. In these austere and powerful reliefs, abstraction gives way to dense matter, which is still, however, static and mineral. But then a more supple kind of movement, evocative of Soulages, emerges to order the work. Curious forms like the long scaly trunk surmounted by a darkish sphere, which undulates against a background of warm blue and orange enhanced by a discreet green and dots of black. The painter's latest canvases are full of movement and flesh. They begin with a lively composition which explodes to disperse its white and flamey elements against a blue-black night. Kropovnitsky is still working towards the broad ensembles which he admires in Poliakoff, Hartung, and Soulages, and his hand already reveals as a constant inspiration the dynamism of cosmic and galactic matter and the coloured, familiar grain of the earth.

Krasnopevtsev, too, finds in matter the essential theme of his variations. Elegant and distinguished, with keen features and clear eyes, this young painter introduced me to his strange universe on a soft snowy winter evening in Moscow. Krasnopevtsev loves most in nature its most firm and definite forms, those of peculiar perfection, which evoke a still, mineral world of bare petrified beauty. The bizarre

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pebble, the fossil, the moose's jaw-bone, the wild Asian ram's horn, are ranged on his shelves, along with a great variety of shells, with their pure contour—the conch, the trumpet, the spiral, the cowrie, the helmet—waiting to be projected on to canvas. But in fact Krasnopevtsev often prefers to combine one of these natural finds with a man-made aesthetic object—twirl shell and obelisk, whorl shell with antique cast—to make a harmonious group against a black background, like a night in which the eye loses itself. Sometimes instead of these strange uneasy creations, Krasnopevtsev designs compositions in watery tints: bare walls or slabs of wall exposing their empty anxiety with a piteous-seeming appeal for some human presence. The disquiet of black, the void of bare walls, become insistent and almost tragic in the superb canvas in which some jugs appear to turn towards us their anguished necks and inflict upon us, instead of an oval perspective, a round opening, filled with night. Matter reveals itself in his pictures, beautiful and inhuman, fossilised against a disquieting background, or else bathing in cold watery light: it is an almost surrealist painting, in which dense and aggressive existence threatens the glacial beauty of forms.

In the case of Rabin it is not so much disquiet as a humble sadness, a tragic calm, that exhales from his canvases. A friend of Ehrenburg, this painter has exhibited several times with the 'Young Artists of Moscow', but for the most part early and somewhat impersonal works. Rabin was obliged to work for ten years as a railwayman, and he is still permeated with the railway landscapes and the humble Moscow suburbs, where he still lives in a wooden shack. His early pictures, which are purely expressionist, show a dark and menacing suburban world—visions of walls surmounted by misshapen convulsive electric pylons like horrific tentacles gripping the earth, or jagged blue-black ruins sinisterly lit by an electric light bulb conspicuous in the foreground. After these destructive visions, the artist turns to the typical suburban winter landscapes of Moscow, whose austere charm resides in the contrast of the pallid snow and the dark houses, their windows revealing the warm glow within, and the luminous colours of shop signs and posters. Out of these re-created landscapes there develops an art of '*intimiste* exteriors', which leaves man out, though it shows everywhere his touching and naive traces, as, for example, in children's graffiti. Rabin loves the humble little shacks of the suburb of Lianozovo, whose warped lines seem to echo the irregularities of the good earth on which they rest—while the shapeless oval of a gigantic moon weighs down on them, and the glowing windows, like stained glass, relieve the murky blackness of their walls. All the ostensible clumsiness, which is in fact a tender expressionism, is only a way of emphasising the warmth of poetry distilled from an inner intimacy. Nor is humour lacking from this melancholy world, as witness the constantly recurring black cat with green eyes and a devastating grin, the cactuses adorned with forks on a field of snow, the sputnik above the miserable pit full of petrol

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cans, hollowed out of the snow-covered rock, and the enormous onions and bottles of vodka in close-up against a background of shanties. The black line picking out the forms recalls Guerrier and, even more, Rouault; the colours are those of expressionist pictures, shrill and tender, warm and sad. Rabin's pictures distil a powerful poetry, mixed with tenderness and fantastic humour, the poetry of '*intimiste* exteriors', and they bear witness to an aesthetic realisation, an assured personal style, and a profound humane sensibility.[6]

The last figure in this imagined collection, Zverev, is undoubtedly the most promising and possessed of the most genius. Having discovered him recently, during a stay in the USSR, Igor Markevitch organised a Zverev exhibition in Paris (and later in Geneva) with the canvases he bought from him. Markevitch has written with astonished admiration that with Zverev 'one is in the presence of a miraculously gifted artist, who is destined to a place among the most complete painters of our time'. A certain museum of Modern Art in a very important metropolis would seem to have been convinced of this ever since 1959. This young painter—whose very name is a symbol, being derived from the Russian word for 'fauve'—lives a retired life, with an equal passion for loving, drinking, and painting, in an extraordinary frenzy of power and the violent joy of creation. In all his self-portraits—which are so often a fruitful kind of narcissism for artists because they are a method of introspection—his wild eyes reveal this insatiable zest for pleasures, for the pleasures of form, the pleasures of colour. Zverev lives only to paint. He paints as a man devours food. Any piece of paper or board and some colours, or failing that any coloured material such as soft cheese (!), and he has all he needs for his creative ecstasy. This has been described best by Igor Markevitch: 'Zverev at work calls for the camera of a Clouzot. He is seized by a frenzy, as though his hand were at its service for releasing a tumultuous torrent of images which his drawing can scarcely keep pace with. It is like a psychic dam-burst and the transmission of thought is so swift that some of Zverev's works appear to anyone watching them in progress to be like superb encephalograms. It is not unusual for him to produce a hundred drawings or twenty gouaches in a day.' He neither signs his sketches nor troubles to destroy them; he lets them pile up and pays no attention to his admirers scrupulously classifying them. He has the rich and supple line of a Japanese master and the lightning-flash simplicity of a Picasso. This aspect of Zverev was felicitously defined by Jean Cocteau after seeing a sequence of horses in black ink: 'a Chinese Daumier'. His animal drawings and his sketches of women catch precisely the vivacity of the movement. For example, the astonishing series of about sixty prints which celebrate sexual potency and which would make a marvellous illustration for the *Golden Ass* of Apuleius; in their beauty of line and purity of form they

[6] See the article by the present writer on Rabin in *Survey*, October 1965.

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transcend eroticism, and one is reminded of certain prints of Matisse for poems by Apollinaire. His oils and gouaches are dedicated to all the genres, with varying success. He excels in self-portraits and in such classic themes as the guitar with bottles, but above all in Russian landscape. Sometimes delicate harmonies of watery tones, gilded cupolas against blue sky and mauve clouds, sometimes a dazzling profusion of colour, suggestive of autumn, with tragic domes and their black crosses rising out of the conflagration. His genius flows out in all directions, free studies which recapitulate, under the sole guidance of intuition, the phases of contemporary pictorial language. Igor Markevitch assures us that he has passed through the stage of the masters of the icons and of classicism, and of Odilon Redon, Rouault, Dufy, Soutine, Kokoschka, Chagall, or Bacon, sometimes without even knowing about them. When Zverev has learned to control his creative extravagance and to combine purity of line with the colourful power of composition, Russia will have another master to place alongside Malevich, Kandinsky and Chagall.

THIS brief sketch of four tendencies—among so many unknown ones—of the new Soviet painting allows us to draw one important conclusion. What, in fact, has the Soviet artist been painting and what is he still painting? What is his subject? The revolutionary, the partisan, the worker, the peasant. But now there are young painters who are not concerned about the subject, which is only an alibi, as Roger Garaudy, the French Marxist, has very well said; what interests them is form, not empty abstract form, however, but *that form which is a reconstruction on the human plane of another kind of nature*, the form that Balzac was thinking of, although himself a master of realism, when he wrote that: 'Everything is form and life itself is form.' And in doing this they exalt that very matter, that world of objects, which should constitute the second dialectical term in genuine Marxist thought. They paint the fact and not the concept. Kropovnitsky meditates upon flesh and the dynamic of matter, Krasnopevtsev upon nature's happy strokes, Rabin upon the humble day-to-day world, Zverev upon line, colour, and the essential forms into which matter is moulded by man. These and their fellows are the artists 'of a realism without boundaries', as Garaudy describes them.[7]

For M. Garaudy, an established communist theorist, has launched with Aragon's support the 'modernist' attack in the Soviet press. This battle of Marxists, on one side modernists and on the other socialist-realists, proves that the question is being discussed at the very centre of the Soviet world and that cultural 'polycentrism' is beginning to exist in the USSR. But the struggle is extremely violent; the old arguments reappear, thus proving that evolution proceeds through suffering; one side is accused of 'modernism', 'bourgeois decadence',

[7] Roger Garaudy: *D'un réalisme sans rivages* (Paris, 1963).

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'social putrefaction', and the other of 'dogmatism', 'narrow criteria', 'conservatism'. Each of the adversaries appeals, and this is not surprising, to Marxism. One party brandishes the sacred books, which cannot be spoken against, the other appeals to the spirit of the texts, to the changes in the modern world, to the facts of art. Each side sticks firmly to its position, and, as is well known, if the peaceful coexistence of ideologies is something inherently impossible, in art the process of levelling-out and the practice of dogmatism are even more so. According to Picasso, art is always *in opposition*. In this sense one could say that the struggle of the new Soviet painting is in opposition to the canons of the past, and to 'the need to make over, sweeten, poeticise, and soften', as Aragon put it; what it is struggling *for* is the development of art, even if it sometimes has to be patient, like the painter whom Ehrenburg described. It is not the theorists, however well-intentioned, who will decide the issue; it is the artists who will tip the balance by the sole weight of their work. Because, in the end, and leaving all arguments aside, where is art unless there are works of art?

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THE SOVIET ECONOMY

In Search of a Pattern

Leon Smolinski

THOREAU once noted that decayed dogmas make the richest soil. This summarises the Soviet economy's present situation. It has outgrown the Stalinist doctrine of industrialisation. The old system, for decades a reliable generator of growth, has turned into a brake. Warning signals of inefficiency and arrested development are rapidly multiplying. At the same time, although the traditional theory and practice of planning have proved inadequate to cope with the complexities of a mature modern economy, the decay of the obsolete dogma contains seeds of future growth. Therefore, rather than designate the present stage of Soviet economic development as one of acute crisis, one might view it as a period of transition to new, as yet untried and only dimly discernible institutional arrangements and forms of socialist planning.

When the present system was being shaped, in 1931, Stalin stated: 'We have fallen behind the advanced countries by as much as fifty to one hundred years. We have to overcome this lag within ten years. Either we accomplish this, or we perish' (*Pravda*, 5 February 1931). Industrialisation was thus conceived as a race against time, a fight for economic and political survival. When the goal is survival, acceptable alternatives are lacking, and no cost is too high. In fact, in the absence of alternatives, the very concept of cost loses its meaning. A leading Soviet economist appraises this essentially military approach to economic decisions by concluding that until recent years 'the policy of reaching an objective regardless of cost was not only not condemned but even encouraged'.[1]

The overriding objective established by Stalin was 'to catch up with and overtake the advanced capitalist countries' by assuring a high rate of growth of heavy industry. To make certain that the rate and pattern of growth would obey the planners' rather than the consumers' preferences, the output targets were determined by the Central Planning Board, which also allocated free of charge investment funds and rationed out supplies needed to meet the targets. These policies promoted a rapid albeit unbalanced growth. According to reliable western estimates, industrial output increased about 7·5-fold between 1928 and 1958. Within this total, output of machinery rose 27·2-fold, that of other producer goods 9·7-fold, whereas output of consumer goods increased only 3·8 times.[2]

[1] A. Birman, *Ekonomicheskaia gazeta*, No. 24, 1963, p. 6.
[2] N. M. Kaplan and R. H. Moorsteen. *American Economic Review*, June 1960, p. 296.

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Foremost among the ingredients of the Stalinist recipe for industrialisation was the system that Holland Hunter calls 'taut planning', whereby the central planners tend to set aggregate output targets in excess of the factory managers' combined ability to meet them with the available inputs. Coupled with the disregard of cost, this continued pressure of (to use Peter Wiles's term) 'planners' excess demand', while promoting rapid quantitative growth, led to the emergence of a seller's market throughout Soviet industry. Subjected to relentless pressure to increase their output and assured of markets, managers lack incentive to maintain quality standards, to introduce new superior products or methods of production, or to pay much attention to the actual needs of those who use their produce unless these are specifically set out in the planners' commands. But, by the same token, whenever a factory manager acts as a buyer, he is no longer a beneficiary but a victim of the seller's market. It is his needs that are now disregarded by other managers, and his inputs that are not delivered on schedule or in the desired assortment. The notorious unreliability of the outside supplies, coupled with their crucial importance for plan fulfilment, has encouraged autarkic policies on the part of managers. As a result, Soviet factories tend to grow into highly integrated empires which, instead of getting their semi-manufactured products, such as castings, forgings, spare parts, from large-scale, efficient, specialised outside suppliers, produce them in their own plants, on an uneconomically small scale, using primitive methods, and, as will be seen presently, at a prohibitive cost.

This brings us to another crucial feature of Soviet industrialisation which, unlike those already mentioned, has so far received relatively little attention from students of the Soviet economy, and will accordingly be discussed at a somewhat greater length. As a result of the rigid priorities pursued in its investment policies and of the institutional barriers arising in their wake, the Soviet Union has developed into a 'dual economy'[3] in which a factor of production may have very different marginal productivities and rates of return in different sectors (e.g. heavy vs. consumer goods industries), in different segments of the same industry (e.g. large-scale modern establishments vs. small-scale backward relics of the eighteenth century), and even in the different shops of the same factory. In each of these cases there is evidence of over-investment in the modern segment while its primitive counterpart, which has had a low priority in the planners' scales, is starved of capital and resources.

LET us begin with a case study. In the Russian republic of the USSR, along with dozens of modern, giant steel rolling mills, there operate eighty small ones, of which only three are modern and relatively efficient, while the remaining seventy-seven date from the nineteenth

[3] The term was coined by a Dutch economist, Professor Boeke.

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and even the eighteenth century, and have a labour productivity one-twentieth to one-thirtieth of that of the modern mills.[4]

The example is rather typical. It comes as a surprise after four decades of 'giantist' investment policies to learn that the vast majority of Soviet industrial establishments are in fact uneconomically small, technically backward, and quite inadequately mechanised. It is true that in the early 1960s the bulk of industrial output (about 70 per cent) was produced in some 20,000 relatively large enterprises administered by the regional economic councils (the Sovnarkhozy), with an average size of some 200 wage earners per establishment. But these enterprises made up only 10 per cent of the Soviet industry's 200,000 census establishments. An average factory outside the Sovnarkhoz jurisdiction employs only 50 wage earners. And when we count *all* industrial establishments, both included in and excluded from the census, regardless of their administrative affiliation, we find that roughly 80 per cent of them employed, in 1960, fewer than 16 wage earners each.[5]

It is true that the size of an enterprise by itself tells us little about its efficiency. A small establishment may be quite efficient provided it is narrowly specialised and adequately supplied with modern machinery. Under Soviet conditions, however, establishments in the lower-size classes tend to be backward and inefficient, mainly because of the long-standing giantist investment policies under which they were discriminated against in the allocation of funds and resources. Soviet industry consists, then, of the modern sector of mainly large-scale, modern establishments, highly mechanised, and in some respects over-supplied with machinery, surrounded by a limbo of backward small-scale producers, tens of thousands of factories, mines, and shops which use antiquated methods of production, lack equipment, and waste labour and materials.

In the electric power industry, for example, the planners' whole attention was directed at the build-up of large district stations. Their average size increased forty-five-fold between 1916 and 1960 (from 1·4 to 63·0 thousand kilowatts). But the size of all remaining stations outside that privileged group has actually declined, by 42 per cent, from 183 to 106 kilowatts. During the 1950s alone, along with the widely publicised 'giants', 53,000 pygmy stations, with an average capacity of only 53 kilowatts, were built, even though they produce power at a cost 10 to 20 times higher than the large district stations.[6]

How did this strange schizoid pattern come into being? How to explain the uncanny ability for survival of the inefficient pygmies in the face of the planners' unconditional preference for the giants?

[4] P. G. Bunich, *Osnovnye fondy sotsialisticheskoi promyshlennosti* (Moscow, 1960), p. 194.

[5] *Pravda*, 20 November 1962; *Ekonomicheskaia gazeta*, No. 3, 1961; *Kommunist*, No. 2, 1963, p. 39. The last figure refers to the Russian republic alone but is not likely to be significantly different for the country as a whole.

[6] N. N. Nekrasov, ed., *Voprosy razmeshchenia proizvodstva v SSSR* (Moscow, 1965), p. 211.

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The first five-year plan, in 1929, anticipated an all-out 'liquidation of small establishments [as] being backward and using deficient techniques . . . and their replacement by the giants'.[7] While the new giant projects were under construction, the despicable pygmies were raided for skilled personnel, and even the simplest machinery was denied them in the investment programmes, on the ground that 'they are to be scrapped anyway'.[8] But the death verdict was continually postponed. Under the policy of maximising output irrespective of cost, an economic agency could hardly afford closing down any establishment under its jurisdiction, however small and inefficient. At the same time, since only a limited number of giants could be launched and construction delays are, in Soviet practice, inordinately long, smaller factories and mines had often to be constructed as stop-gap measures. Administrative barriers and the reluctance to rely on outside supplies have also contributed to this phenomenon. Striving for autarky and lacking funds for the construction of a giant, each economic agency was contributing to the crop of new dwarf establishments. In mining of non-ore building materials, for example, 4,000 out of 5,500 enterprises are in the lowest-size class, each producing less than 25,000 cubic metres of output annually. They have been set up by and subordinated to dozens of different organisations and agencies, including such unlikely ones as the Ministry of Culture, the Ministry of Health, and even the local bazaars. Dozens of mines, each belonging to a different agency, are often set up on one deposit—although replacing them with one big mine would reduce the cost of production by a factor of 3 or 4.[9] The construction of tens of thousands of miniscule electric power installations is explainable on similar grounds. The large, efficient district stations were prohibited from supplying power to some categories of customers (e.g. collective farms), while other users preferred to produce their own power rather than rely on the outside supplier. This is how eighteenth-century steel mills and 50 KW electric stations continue to crowd the path of Soviet industrialisation and lower the overall efficiency with which Soviet industry operates.

But the boundaries between the modern and the primitive sector of the dual Soviet economy not only separate large from small-scale industrial enterprises. They do not stop at the walls of a factory but rather run across them, following the lines of Soviet planners' priorities in investment policies. Thus, even in the most modern factories or mines, production processes proper tend to be much more highly mechanised than are auxiliary processes such as shipping, office work, repair facilities, and all those autarky-inspired auxiliary shops already mentioned. Labour productivity in all these auxiliary activities tends to be much lower than in the production processes, mainly because they are less thoroughly mechanised. The magnitude of the gap is illustrated

[7] *Piatiletnii plan narodnokhoziaistvennogo stroitelstva SSSR*, 3rd ed., vol. II, pp. 89–90.
[8] *Za industrializatsiiu*, 4 January 1933.
[9] *Stroitelnaia gazeta*, 21 October 1963.

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by a recent estimate. In order to free 20–30 production workers, one instals an automated production line which costs from 150 to 200 thousand rubles, while in the shipping department of the same plant, the same number of workers could be freed at the cost of only 4 to 6 thousand rubles by purchasing two or three fork loaders.[10] In a similar case, it has been estimated that one will have to wait 85 years to recoup the original investment in an automated production line. At the same time one refuses to buy a dictaphone for the head manager's office which would repay its cost in two months.[11] Such extreme divergencies in the rate of return on capital employed in different uses indicate that both efficiency and the rate of growth of output could be improved by reallocation of capital to low-priority segments of the dual economy. Nevertheless, sophisticated automation of the already highly mechanised production processes continues to receive a much higher priority than the introduction of simple machinery into auxiliary processes.

IT is an interesting question to what extent the stategy of unbalanced growth pursued by Stalin was justified in the early stages of Soviet economic development. This writer believes that all growth, as well as one of its main determinants, technical progress, is bound to be 'unbalanced' to some extent, almost by definition. But as time goes on the balance has to be redressed. Soviet industry seems to have long ago exceeded what might be termed the optimum degree of imbalance. What is more, recent experience indicates that in Soviet 'unbalanced growth' the adjective has had greater lasting power than the noun.

For decades, as Martin Bronfenbrenner puts it in another context, growth has been for Soviet planners 'like the earth for Molière's doctors of medicine. It covers their failures, while the sun shines on their successes'.[12] In recent years, however, the rate of growth of Soviet industrial production has exhibited a declining trend. According to estimates made by western analysts, it declined from an average annual 10·1 per cent during the years 1953–55, to 9·7 per cent in 1956–59, and to 7·0 per cent in 1960–63. The 6·6 per cent increase in industrial output achieved in 1963 was the lowest annual figure since the end of the second world war,[13] and the 1964 performance, judging by the official Soviet statistics, was probably even poorer.

The main reason for the slowdown seems to be that at the present stage of Soviet economic development further industrial expansion increasingly depends on the 'intensive' margin of growth: more effective utilisation of labour, capital, and natural resources; better coordination and synchronisation of their use; reduction in the real

[10] E. D. Sokolina, *Ot universalnogo zavoda k spetsialnomu*, Ekonomika, seria III, No. 4, p. 22. Sokolina's findings have to be qualified to the extent that production workers are likely to be more skilled than those engaged in freight handling.

[11] *Voprosy ekonomiki*, No. 5, 1965, p. 36; *Pravda*, 24 November 1964.

[12] Quoted by G. Grossman, *Quarterly Journal of Economics*, August 1953, p. 341.

[13] Joint Economic Committee, Congress of the United States, *Current Economic Indicators for the USSR* (Washington, June 1965), p. 45; Kaplan and Moorsteen, *loc. cit.*, p. 307.

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factor cost of producing industrial output. Among the necessary conditions for this intensive type of growth are rapid technical progress, including such ingredients of the Second Industrial Revolution as automation, computerisation, 'chemicalisation'; improvement in the quality and reliability of equipment and industrial supplies; significant extension of the division of labour among factories through narrow specialisation and sub-contracting; improved ability of the economic system to assure availability of inputs at times and in assortments desired by their users.

There are several impelling reasons why these, let us call them qualitative determinants of growth, have become of crucial importance at present. There are equally valid reasons why traditional Soviet methods fail to cope with them.

One is the changing nature of modern industrial output, the increasing variety, complexity, and interdependence of products. The old system was set up to plan and administer production and distribution of a relatively small number of products, or groups of products, others being often treated as shock absorbers for planning errors and unexpected shortages. At present, a complete standard industrial classification (which the Russians have as yet failed to compile) would have to embrace about twenty million products. The chemical industry furnishes a good example of the assortment explosion that is taking place. In addition to the 'big chemistry' of a few dozen traditional products, each manufactured in millions of tons in giant factories, the so-called 'small chemistry' has now acquired a strategic importance. Here the assortment runs into tens of thousands, each item being manufactured as a rule in only a few or a few hundred tons.[14] Central planning of the production and distribution of tens of thousands of products in this one industry alone would swamp the central planning board. In addition, 'small chemistry' products have to be of an exceptional purity and adhere to exact quality standards, another requirement difficult to enforce from the centre.

Secondly, Stalinist methods were quite effective in enforcing the 'more of the same' type of output increases but offered little guidance as regards the introduction of new products or methods of production. Under what Academician Gnedenko calls 'an avalanchelike acceleration of the rate of modern scientific and technical progress',[15] a substantial share of the twenty million products manufactured by Soviet industry are bound to get obsolete each year and have to be replaced by new products. The number of new types of machinery created in 1950 was 650; by 1963 it rose to 3,229.[16] But, from the economic viewpoint, decisions to introduce new machines in Soviet industry are taken in a rather haphazard manner. For example, the economic (as distinct from technical) effectiveness of new machinery is ignored in these decisions,

[14] *Ekonomicheskaia gazeta*, No. 18, 1963, p. 17. Academician A. N. Nesmeianov, *Vestnik akademii nauk SSSR*, No. 4, 1964, pp. 98–101.
[15] *Izvestia*, 3 July 1963.
[16] *Narodnoe Khoziaistvo SSSR v 1963 godu*, p. 171.

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and 'technical problems are solved without even taking into account the cost of production'.[17]

The even more momentous decisions on the allocation of investment funds among industries are similarly handicapped by the lack of economic criteria such as prices based on factor cost, and rate of interest. Lacking such criteria, planners' priorities are difficult to arrive at, and, as two experts conclude, 'in order to determine whether a given industry is progressive we must often look across the ocean while, after all, this should not be our only guidepost'.[18]

If central planners are handicapped in their innovational policies by the inadequacy of criteria of choice, factory managers often resist innovation for lack of incentives. The existing system, with its emphasis on the maximisation of output in the short run, provides the factory managers with little encouragement to introduce new products and methods of production, the short-run effect of which is typically to reduce output, raise operating expenses, cut labour productivity, and increase immeasurably the amount of waste and rejects (by 700 per cent in one case). No wonder the managers try to avoid innovations. Only 4 per cent of the 1963 target for the production of new consumer goods of superior quality was met. New kinds of cotton fabrics accounted for only 2 per cent of the 1962 output: at that rate it would take 50 years to change their assortment completely.[19]

TO come to the quality of industrial products. Academician Gnedenko asks that in the Soviet economy, 'production of shoddy, low quality goods should be punishable as a very grave offence. In reality, however, utterly inadequate attention is paid to the quality and reliability of products'. A factory manufacturing parts for tractors, for example, was rewarded for over-fulfilling its output plan by 60 per cent. This feat was achieved by lowering the quality and reducing the useful life of the parts produced to 40–50 per cent of what it had been. Not only are incentives for quality improvement lacking. The planned goals often set up actually penalise it. When the personnel of the Moscow ZIL plant managed to reduce the weight of the automobiles they produce by 100 kilograms, 'they received a commendation but suffered a reduction in earnings: the factory's output goals are set in tons'.[20]

Thirdly, modern technical progress greatly increases the interdependence of various participants in the production process. Hence, their proper synchronisation and coordination become crucial. In particular, modern equipment poses exacting demands with respect to the quality, reliability, and prompt delivery of supplies, and any disregard of these demands is bound to have costly consequences. For example, modern giant blast furnaces have an extremely narrow margin

[17] A. V. Vorobeva, *Osnovnye fondy i sebestoimost produktsii v promyshlennosti* (Moscow, 1962), p. 178 ff.
[18] *Izvestia*, 4 December 1964.
[19] Vorobeva, op. cit., p. 170; *Voprosy ekonomiki*, No. 5, 1964, pp. 49 and 57.
[20] *Izvestia*, 3 July 1963; *Ekonomicheskaia gazeta*, No. 34, 1964, p. 16.

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of tolerance with respect to the quality of coke and ore. When one such furnace was fed with poor quality ore transported over long distances, the resulting excess operating expenses over a period of one-and-a-half years reached the original cost of constructing the furnace in question.[21] The irregular delivery of supplies to a new automated production line (a perennial phenomenon on the Soviet industrial scene) results in fluctuations in the cost of production from 45 to 190 rubles per ton of bolt, depending on the load factor in various months, whereas the line was purchased on the assumption of an even-keel operation which would bring the operating expenses down to 34 rubles a ton.[22] No wonder some expensive automated lines get scrapped due to uneconomically high operating expenses.[23]

This interdependence syndrome puts a premium upon the precision and reliability with which any participant in the production process operates. This is true of pieces of equipment, their components, and whole factories. Failure in any one link tends to have magnified effects upon the performance of other links. Thus, high-speed electronic computers are made up of several hundred thousand separately identifiable components. The erroneous performance of any one of them affects the reliability of the work performed by the machine as a whole. In fact, the low quality standards and the defects occurring in minor components of Soviet computers seem to represent a weak link in the ambitious plans for the computerisation of Soviet industrial operations and economic planning. The need for improvement in this area is brought out by Professor Litenetskii, who claims that in order to make a widespread use of electronic computers possible in the Soviet economy, their output by 1980 has to be increased at least six-fold. but their reliability has to be improved by at least a factor of 1,000 (*Izvestia*, 18 December 1964). In the article already quoted, Academician Gnedenko points out that the further progress of automation depends on a radical improvement in the reliability of Soviet equipment.

The very size of the modern units of equipment makes the consequences of defects occurring in any one of their numerous components particularly costly. A modern Soviet electric power turbine of 500,000 kW capacity (or five times more than the largest pre-war unit) contains a total length of piping of some 470 kilometres, including 70,000 weldings. Should only 0·5 per cent of the pipe weldings be defective, this would mean up to 350 breakdowns of the whole huge unit. And this is in fact what happens: the new giant units do continually stop functioning due to defects in the boiler pipes and in their welded joints (*Pravda*, 20 January 1965).

So far we have dealt with the components of a single piece of equipment. But in modern automated factories several such pieces are

21 *Ibid.* No. 25, 1965, p. 15.
22 T. S. Khachaturov, ed., *Metody i praktika opredelenia effektivnosti kapitalnykh vlozhenii i novoi tekhniki*, vypusk 5–6 (Moscow, 1964), p. 27.
23 *Problemy povyshenia effektovnosti obshchestvennogo truda v SSSR* (Moscow, 1965), pp. 88, 100.

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typically combined into a complex whole. 'The reliability of equipment becomes particularly important in automated production. . . . The faulty performance of only one link leads to stoppages of the whole automated line and an interruption in production.' As a result, 'a complex and expensive automated line, excellently designed and built, may be put out of operation by some unfit relay or contact worth two kopeks'. In fact it is mainly the low reliability of Soviet automated equipment that leads to the uneconomically costly performance and even to the scrapping of some new automated lines installed in recent years, while others work at only 25–30 per cent of their designed capacity.[24]

On a still higher level, the interdependence of the various shops and departments is also much greater in a modern factory. As already mentioned, in Soviet factories production processes have traditionally had a high priority in the allocation of investment funds and are considerably better mechanised than auxiliary processes such as shipping, repairs, and office work, where manual work predominates. The priorities which led to this development may have been entirely rational in the relatively primitive economy of the 1930s when labour was over abundant and the strategy of concentrating scant investment funds on a limited number of activities most directly contributing to growth was almost a must. David Granick has argued convincingly that, at that early stage, the policy of using modern large-scale machinery in production and manual labour in auxiliary shops was a rational adaptation of western production methods to an economy with different scarcity relationships.[25] But by now capital has become relatively more abundant and the continued neglect of auxiliary operations is hardly justified any longer. On the contrary, the adverse feedback from the neglected, low-priority auxiliary operations has an increasingly disruptive effect on the production processes. To give just one example, frequent breakdowns of automated lines are due in part to unsatisfactory lubrication: admixtures of sand and iron dust get into the lubricants, which are then applied by unskilled personnel at irregular intervals of time. No one is responsible for the cleaning of the equipment from dust and from metal shavings, and the floors are still swept with the traditional birch besoms. Dirty window-panes in industrial establishments result in an annual over-expenditure of 11 billion kilowatt-hours of electric power (enough to produce 15 million tons of steel), without counting the adverse effects on the workers' health and productivity.[26] The explanation of this state of affairs is simple. Under the Soviet system of success indicators, a worker smelting steel contributes to the fulfilment of the output goal while a charwoman does not. In fact, however, their activities are more

[24] *Ibid.* pp. 88, 100; *Ekonomicheskaia gazeta*, 1965, No. 13, p. 17; No. 19, p. 17.
[25] G. Grossman, ed., *Value and Plan* (University of California Press, 1960), p. 271 ff.
[26] A. Astafiev, *Kultura proizvodstva na predpriatiakh* (Moscow, 1962), p. 64; T. S. Khachaturov, ed., *op. cit.*, p. 46.

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intimately interrelated than the planners care to recognise and the neglect of one reduces the efficiency of the other.

So much for the single enterprise. On a still higher level of interdependence, modern industrial economics requires a far-reaching division of labour among factories, through specialisation and sub-contracting. As the leading Soviet specialist in this area puts it, 'with each year, the need for specialisation and for automation grows. This is a pre-condition for speeding up industrial production and reducing its cost'. The two are interrelated: 'automation of production presupposes narrow specialisation [of factories]'.[27] A case study has shown that it costs 6 to 29 times less to produce even such simple commodities as screws and nuts in specialised factories than under the present system where auxiliary shops manufacture them on a small scale for each factory's own needs.[28] But, so long as the sellers' market prevails, no sane manager is willing to get rid of his expensive but reliable auxiliary shops and to become dependent instead on less expensive but unreliable outside suppliers. No wonder practically all Soviet machine tool plants have their own forge shops, for example, while only 14 out of 1,000 American factories have them. The cost of autarky and of division of labour forgone can be gathered from the fact that the great majority of Soviet forge shops produced less than 800 tons of forgings a year. But, as output of a shop rises from 800 to 40,000 tons (which would be the normal size of a specialised factory), productivity of labour rises 3·2 times and that of equipment 21 times. A similar situation prevails in other auxiliary activities. In general, outside supplies account for about 15 per cent of the value of Soviet machine tool plants' output, against some 50 to 60 per cent in the USA.[29]

As in previous examples, the managers' interests enter into conflict with those of the economy as a whole. If each factory specialised in the production of those commodities it is best fitted to produce and obtained supplies which it cannot produce efficiently from the outside, the economy would save tens of billions of rubles. But so long as the sellers' market prevails and the buyer has little recourse against the sellers' and the planners' infractions of the sub-contracting agreements, the managers' resistance to sub-contracting is entirely rational from the viewpoint of their own economic interests. This is brought out by the experience of the Leningrad factory Elektrosila, producing huge turbogenerators, which obtains a very minor component, salt gauges, from sub-contractor A, who in turn gets the necessary parts, the so-called bridges, from sub-contractor B. Planners forgot to include bridges in B's output plan. So the salt-gauges were not produced and six giant turbogenerators have been standing idle, at the cost to the economy of tens of thousands of rubles a day. The cost of a salt gauge produced in the

[27] G. I. Samborskii, *Avtomatizatsia i spetsializatsia v promyshlennosti SSSR* (Moscow, 1964), p. 178.
[28] S. A. Kheinman, *Ekonomicheskie problemy organizatsii promyshlennogo proizvodstva* (Moscow, 1961), p. 211.
[29] *Vestnik mashinostroenia*, No. 4, 1962, p. 80; *Mashinostroitel*, No. 10, 1958, p. 33.

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specialised plant is 456 rubles and it is easy to calculate that, even if the Leningrad manager produced them for himself at ten times that figure, he would recoup the loss in one day (*Izvestia*, 6 October 1964). Nor are the factory managers likely to agree to becoming dependent on centralised repair facilities, even though their own repair shops tend to be inefficient. The example of agriculture, where central repair shops have been set up, is not encouraging. The shops apparently utilise their monopoly position to issue ultimata to farm directors, charge them monopolistic prices, and try to perform repairs as frequently as possible so as to meet their planned targets.[80]

ALL these problems converge in the final analysis at the factory manager's desk. He is the tragic hero of the comedy of planners' errors. Not unlike Oscar Wilde's cynic, he knows the price of everything and the value of nothing. Although Soviet planners fix as many as eight million prices (including over 700 prices for cherry preserves alone),[81] price catalogues are of little help to the manager in determining the costs or benefits society derives from his actions, since Soviet prices fail to reflect the actual relative factor costs of commodities or the actual urgency of demand for them. This seriously impairs the effectiveness of some of the reforms already implemented or being proposed.

The policy of disregarding costs was repudiated as early as 1959, when the percentage by which a manager manages to reduce his cost of production was supposedly made the chief success indicator. But in practice the goal of cost reduction was merely added to the old goal of increasing output, and the two cannot always be achieved jointly: at times an increase in output can be achieved only at rising cost per unit. Moreover, costs are, of course, computed in terms of irrational prices. Finally, 'under the present system of bonuses for cost reduction we calculate only savings achieved within the enterprise in question, and leave completely out of account its consequences to the user of the product, the effect outside the walls of the enterprise' (*Izvestia*, 18 September 1964). The writer illustrates his point: 'Should it occur to anyone to reduce the cost of milk by mixing it with water, he would undoubtedly land in jail or in a lunatic asylum. But what is the difference between this kind of "savings" and the reduction by 15 per cent of the average useful life of the Volga automobile imposed with the aim of reducing its cost?'

A more appropriate synthetic success indicator would be profit maximisation, proposed by such economists as Liberman and Nemchinov. But here again, as Nemchinov himself pointed out, given the existing irrational prices, commodities in greatest demand are also often the least profitable for the enterprises to produce, whereas those from which the enterprise derives most profit may find no demand and

[80] *Voprosy ekonomiki*, No. 5, 1965, p. 72; *Selskaia zhizn*, 11 March 1965.
[81] *Pravda*, 30 July 1965.

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remain in unsaleable stocks. The wholesale price reform, in preparation for several years, and now scheduled for 1967–68, is likely to alleviate these difficulties.

Lip-service is readily paid to the need for quality improvement and for fitting industrial products to the users' needs, but the fact remains that it is by lowering the quality of his product that the manager can most easily increase output, reduce costs, and obtain the coveted bonus. The institution of 'direct links' between the buying and selling enterprises began as an experiment in two textile factories in July 1964 and is gradually being expanded into various consumer and producer goods industries. Under this set-up, which would in effect eliminate the seller's market, the manager's targets would be based on orders received from the factories or stores buying his product: he would no longer produce 'for the plan' but for the consumer. The reform is promising, but given the complicated interdependencies among producers discussed above, the new set-up, to be successful, would have eventually to encompass the whole of Soviet industry rather than a few selected experimental areas. Otherwise the islands of profit-motivated rationality are likely to be submerged by the bureaucratic environment.

TO come now to the problems of the dual economy. An attempt was made under Khrushchev to fuse its two segments by purely administrative reorganisations: all local, small-scale industry was simply made subordinate to the jurisdiction of the regional economic councils. The results were disappointing. The councils, forced suddenly to administer tens of thousands of additional enterprises, found the task prohibitively difficult and tended to solve it in the simplest possible way, by closing down about half of them and stopping the production of many goods.[32] Khrushchev himself complained bitterly of this 'solution'. The Sovnarkhoz and republican leaders, 'instead of raising the technical level of production of [local industry] enterprises transferred to them, instead of specialising them and in this way increasing the output and improving the quality of consumer goods, substantially reduced or completely halted the manufacture of these products' (*Pravda*, 14 July 1964).

Another, far more interesting and successful attempt to bridge the gap between the modern and the primitive sectors of the dual economy is the so-called 'Soviet firms', the first major organisational innovation on the enterprise level in thirty years. A typical firm comes into being at the initiative of the regional economic council by the merger of four, five, or more establishments which may be located in different cities, but which usually are engaged in the production of closely related commodities or in different stages of production of the same commodity. Typically, one of the merged establishments, the so-called head enterprise, is a large-scale, modern, efficient unit. The remaining establishments in the firm are usually much smaller, less advanced, and

[32] *Ekonomicheskaia gazeta*, No. 14, 1965, p. 3.

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less well equipped. They lose their identity and are turned into branches of the head enterprise, whose manager is responsible for the performance of the firm as a whole. He handles its relations with the higher authorities, customers, and suppliers; he apportions the planned targets assigned to the firm among the branches, and often shifts skilled personnel and equipment from the head enterprise (which may be oversupplied with them) to branches so as to turn them into narrowly specialised, modernised, efficient units of production. Where formerly each establishment had a complete set of dwarf auxiliary shops, now one such shop is set up for the firm as a whole. Economies of scale are thus combined with the advantages of having 'one's own' reliable source of supplies. Between 1961 and 1965 some 2,200 industrial enterprises have in this way been merged into some 500 firms. At the beginning of 1965 they employed an estimated 1 million wage earners and accounted for about 4 per cent of Soviet industry's total gross output.[33]

Soviet industry's performance can only be as good as the quality of the plan that governs it. The traditional planning methods worked out under Stalin can neither assure that the lowest cost variants of achieving the planners' ends are adopted nor even that the targets they select are mutually consistent and feasible.[34] The spreading use of mathematical models and of high-speed electronic computers is likely to improve dramatically the quality of Soviet economic planning and administration in the near future and thus contribute to the 'intensive' growth of Soviet industry. For example, the investment plan for the Kuzbas coalfields for the years 1966–70, prepared with the aid of electronic computers, saved two milliard rubles when compared with another variant of that plan prepared with the use of traditional methods.[35] An extremely important innovation is now being tried out in Estonia, the first Soviet republic in which the whole system of economic planning, information flows, and administration is to be completely computerised. This is a very novel project which 'starts literally from scratch. What we are launching here has never before been done in the USSR'. It is expected that optimal solutions of Estonia's planning problems may take five years to develop. The new planning system is eventually to be extended to the country as a whole.[36] In the meantime, however, this is the music of the future and over 90 per cent of economic calculations in the planned Soviet economy continue to be performed with the aid of the abacus.[37]

This figure provides a good illustration of the distance that has yet to be travelled by the backward segments (of which planning activities are one) of the Soviet economy. It can also be viewed as one of

[33] *Kommunist*, No. 3, 1965, p. 58.
[34] See L. Smolinski, in *Foreign Affairs*, July 1964.
[35] *Finansy SSSR*, No. 10, 1963, p. 27.
[36] *Sovetskaia Estonia*, 3 April 1965.
[37] A. I. Berg, *Kibernetika i nadezhnost*, 2nd ed. (Moscow, 1964).

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Alexander Gerschenkron's potential 'advantages of backwardness'. Backwardness, while being a source of present weakness, may turn into a reservoir of future strength provided the need for its elimination is acknowledged and the necessary steps are taken. The present leaders clearly recognise the need for rational economic calculation, for the elimination of the seller's market, the end of output targets fetishism, the reconciliation of the interests of an enterprise with those of the economy as a whole, in short, for a destalinisation of the theory and practice of Soviet industrialisation. The question remains whether they will have the courage of their convictions equal to the courage once exhibited by Joseph Stalin. Nothing short of it will do to eliminate Soviet industry's cultural lag. In the meantime, Soviet industry still represents a fascinating mixture of modern sophistication and primitive backwardnesss.

POLITICAL QUARTERLY

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RECENT UKRAINIAN WRITING

Jaroslaw Pelenski

LITERARY developments in the Soviet Ukrainian Republic in the last five years indicate that the cultural ferment is not limited to the Russian scene. This became apparent in 1963, when the party's campaign against the 'new wave' in Soviet intellectual and artistic life was broadened to include efforts by the highest party officials to suppress the growing literary ferment in the Ukraine.

The occasion for a political showdown was provided in April 1963, at the Republican Conference of the Active Creative Intelligentsia and Ideological Workers in the Ukraine. N. V. Podgorny, at that time first secretary of the central committee of the Communist Party of the Ukraine (and now the chairman of the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet), severely reprimanded Ukrainian writers and artists for serious ideological shortcomings, that is, for falling under the influence of bourgeois propaganda and 'imitating the worst examples of the work of Ehrenburg, Nekrasov, Yevtushenko, and Voznesensky'. 'Unfortunately', commented Podgorny, 'among us, in the Ukraine, there are also people who support the idea of peaceful coexistence of ideologies, free spreading of the creative work of the abstractionists, and who even attempt to lay theoretical foundations for the existence of abstractionism in socialist art' (*Radyanska Ukraina*, 10 April 1963). As an example of such ideological deviation Podgorny quoted a letter from Professor Fainerman, of the Kiev Polytechnical Institute, to the central committee. Professor Fainerman was said to have written: 'We should, in a Bolshevik fashion, master the method of abstractionism, dialectically rethink this method, and give it a Marxist direction'. Ehrenburg's memoirs were criticised because he had 'tendentiously disfigured the life of the Ukrainian people, and thus he earned the praises of the bourgeois press and of Ukrainian nationalists'.

The main target of party criticism was, and still remains, a group of young Ukrainian poets and writers commonly known as *shestydesyatnyky*. They regard themselves as the literary spokesmen of the 'generation of the sixties', and are very popular among students and young adults of the post-war generation. Their appearance on the scene came quite unexpectedly even to the most astute observers. The *shestydesyatnyky*, usually referred to as a group, display strong individualistic attitudes and tastes.

Ivan Drach (born 1936) is the most intellectual poet among them. His sharp analytical mind and highly developed sense of history are combined with a fine feeling for the interrelationships of form and content. Drach's two collections of poetry, *Sonyashnyk* (Sunflower), 1962, and *Protuberantsi sertsya* (Protuberances of the Heart), 1965, assure him a prominent place in contemporary Ukrainian literature.

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The Kiev physician Vitaly Korotych (born 1936), author of three collections of poems, *Zoloti ruky* (Golden Hands), 1961, *Zapakh Neba* (The Fragrance of the Sky), 1962, and *Techiya* (The Stream), 1965, appears to be the Ukrainian counterpart of Yevtushenko. Quite sincere in his search for new forms of expression, and modern in his view of life, Korotych uses theatrical gestures during public poetry readings. He seems to be on good terms with party circles, as he frequently acts in a semi-official capacity during receptions of western intellectuals in Kiev. Speaking fluent English, he seemed quite at his ease during his stay in Canada last year. Mykola Vinhranovsky (born 1936), professional actor and director who was strongly influenced by the famous Ukrainian director Aleksander Dovzhenko, writes lyric and patriotic poetry, at its best highly sensitive; his collection of poems entitled *Atomni prelyudy* (Atomic Preludes) came out in 1962. Somewhat belatedly came recognition for Vasyl Symonenko (1935–1964), who died of cancer at the age of twenty-nine. His first collection of poems, *Tysha i hrim* (Serenity and Thunder), was published in 1962; another, *Zemne tyazhinnya* (The Gravitation of the Earth), 1964, appeared posthumously. In his poetry Symonenko combined realism of expression with fiery patriotic pathos.

The most interesting of the young novelists is Yevhen Hutsalo (born 1937), who has published three volumes of short stories: *Lyudy sered lyudey* (People among People), 1962, *Yabluka z osinn'oho sadu* (Apples from the Orchard in Fall), 1964, and *Olen Avhust* (Avhust the Deer), 1965. His style is impressionistic. His stories are of intimate personal experiences; his characters long for another, almost spiritual internal world, and are at the same time isolated in the day to day reality. His story 'Tell Me About Your Blue Eyes' (*Vitchyzna*, March 1963) is a little masterpiece of an almost existentialist character. Hutsalo's work, like that of Drach, reveals a gifted writer of great promise for the future. Volodymyr Drozd and Valery Shevchuk (both 26 years old) are very talented beginners and could, in more normal circumstances, become leading prose writers in their country.

Closely associated with the tendencies of this group is Lina Kostenko (born 1930), a young woman of remarkable artistic abilities who had established her literary position with two collections of poems: *Prominnya zemli* (Rays of the Earth), 1957, and *Vitryla* (Sails), 1958. Her collection *Mandrivky sertsya* (Journeys of the Heart), 1961, reflects her experiences during a stay in Poland. A fourth collection of poetry, *Zoryanyj intehral* (The Integral of Stars), was announced for 1963, but so far has not been published; this seems to be a form of punishment, for she was often severely reprimanded by official critics for sins of 'formalism' and 'modernism', although her poetry is neither formalistic nor extravagantly modern. She is indeed wholly traditional in her forms of poetical expression, with a strong intuitive lyricism and a passionate acceptance of life.

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THE poets and writers of the sixties have moved away from the dogmas of socialist realism and have brought a fresh approach into the literary life of the Soviet Ukraine, unknown since the thirties. They began to treat literature as art and not as a means for interpreting party decisions or glorifying production goals. Of course, they write poems dealing with Lenin, cosmonauts, or the struggle for peace, but they also emphasise free creativity, truthful description of life, imaginative observation of nature, and a critical attitude towards those public personalities who, for one reason or another, paid their homage to the 'cult of personality'. In this they resemble the Russian liberal writers of the same generation and do not constitute a new phenomenon on the general Soviet scene. The young poets also appear to be continuing those Ukrainian literary currents of the twenties which were brought to an abrupt end in the period of Stalin's terror. On the other hand, the novelists are taken to task by the faithful party critics, not without foundation, for following in their prose such western writers as Hemingway, Faulkner, and Salinger. It seems that Sartre may have influenced some of them also. While their 'westernism' should not be exaggerated, it does remind us of the great intellectual and political battle of the twenties connected with the name of the prominent Ukrainian national communist Mykola Khvylovy.

Lina Kostenko's poem 'Estafety', 1961, expresses her ideological convictions and artistic inspirations:

There are all kinds of batons:
Bourgeois to bourgeois hand down their buffets,
They hand down their greasy spoons and dull knives,
Their own stupidity and others' thoughts.

There are all kinds of batons:
Soldiers to soldiers hand down bayonets,
Masters to masters hand down their secrets,
And tsars to tsars their prisons and edicts.

There are all kinds of batons:
Poets to poets hand down,
From soul to soul,
From tongue to tongue,
Freedom of spirit and the truth of words.

The poetry of the *shestydesyatnyky* has close links with the early writings of Bazhan and Rylsky, and with the creative accomplishments of the Ukrainian futurists and symbolists. Their attitude towards those writers who survived the Stalinist terror is ambivalent. Of these luminaries of the literary revival of the twenties, only the late Maksym Rylsky was able to retain personal affiliation to the younger generation; he encouraged the cultural ferment in the Ukraine after the twentieth CPSU congress and helped to create an atmosphere in which the younger talents could emerge. It is true that after the dreadful experiences of the past, Rylsky may have at times appeared meek and over-cautious.

Quite different is the position of Pavlo Tychyna, appointed in

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March 1962 by the Presidium of the Union of Writers of the Ukraine as a watch-dog over the work of the younger poets. He is probably one of those to whom Ivan Drach dedicated his 'Ode to the Honest Coward' (*Prapor*, 1/1963), in which, among other bitter things, the young poet said:

You have so many sides that you are round like a snake,
You are a white-headed master with a black palate.
You always sing the same song,
That my generation is decadent.

This poem, for obvious reasons, caused a great stir in Kiev literary circles, and Ivan Drach was advised 'to think in a most serious way about his future work in Soviet literature' (*Komunist Ukrainy*, 4/1963). On the same occasion Ye. Letyuk was called to order for a strongly anti-Stalinist poem which was published in the same number of the *Prapor* under the title 'Will I ever Forget the Past', written under the obvious influence of Yevtushenko's 'Stalin's Heirs'.

Besides being critical about the Stalinist past, the poets of the sixties have tried to broaden the framework of socialist realism and to treat art as art. Vitaly Korotych, in his short and precise poem 'And one shouldn't drown thoughts . . .' (1961), revealed his dislike of the bombastic heroism of the official politically oriented doctrine of art:

And one shouldn't drown
Thoughts in the waters of words,
And not all heroes are handsome
And broad-shouldered.
I'm for pure art,
And art is pure when
It's made with
Hands and thoughts that are pure.

There is also apparent in these writings the efforts made by some students and the younger intelligentsia to cultivate intellectual independence. Volodymyr Drozd's short novel *I Love Blue Stars* (*Dnipro*, 2/1962), which deals with Komsomol life, is a good example. Here are the colleagues of the heroine, herself a student and a 'positive' character from the official point of view.

> In our institute there are some students who for some reason are called nihilists. I like to argue with them. They may be mistaken in many respects, but they are able to think. It is so wonderful when people think and do not mechanically learn blind rules for all occasions of life.

The social candour and relative open-mindedness of these young Ukrainian writers are combined with a specific romantic touch. Note that blue is their favourite colour ('blue stars' because they are the 'hottest', 'blue eyes', etc.). A good example of this rather interesting combination of modernist experimentation and romantic longing is the fine *étude* of Yury Koval (24 years old) entitled 'The Blue Dream'

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(*Dnipro*, 5/1964). This is quite understandable in the Ukrainian context. Neo-romanticism also made its imprint on the literary revival of the twenties.

The *shestydesyatnyky* want more artistic freedom, reduction of supervision and political controls, and the toleration of a multitude of artistic styles; these are also the demands of their Russian counterparts. In the condemnation of the 'cult of personality' they were following Yevtushenko and his young Russian compatriots.

In one respect, however, there is a significant difference, and this lies in the national aspect. A contemporary Russian writer or intellectual can be patriotic in his writing; and this patriotism involves no danger. On the contrary, he is expected to be a super-patriot and to glorify his nation. A non-Russian intellectual, on the other hand, must be very cautious in his attitude towards his nationality and the history of his country. The authors of the sixties show a curiously strong commitment to the destiny (*dolya*) of their country and to its history. They are not nationalists but good patriots who are concerned about the future of their country. It is significant that so far the party has not charged them officially with 'bourgeois nationalism'. In fact, the people in question are too young to have been influenced by the Ukrainian nationalist movement; they are products of Soviet life, grown up in a communist environment. So it is particularly interesting to enquire why they have such strong national feelings.

Mykola Vinhranovsky expresses commitment to his homeland in the poem 'Ukranian Prelude' (1961):

You've brought my people to my heart,
You've lit my thoughts with time
And put them into the language of a Ukrainian mother.
I look at you with my heart and mind,
I love you through the universe and through humanity . . .
And through the sunflower in its golden dream,
And through the grey hair of a wise thinker,
And through the wild sweetpeas on the stubble fields . . .

One of the most outspoken interpreters of his country's national destiny is undoubtedly Ivan Drach, whose philosophical poems, 'Knife in the Sun', 1961, and 'Death of Shevchenko', 1962, give a dramatic quality to the writer's interpretation of the Ukrainian national tragedies. Drach is far from being apologetic about his compatriots. On the contrary, there is a strong note of bitterness about the part they have often played in history:

We are Ukrainian sparrows.
Our hair is like the Cossack scalplocks.
A Ukrainian smile shines on our lips,
Ukrainian are our mugs and skulls,
We peck everything that they throw us,
And deeply honour those who show us favour.
The tsar went shoo! at us, and we—so scared—

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We scattered all over the garbage dumps.
Today we serve our own lords,
As God bade us and as did the tsar,
Tomorrow we sidle up to the foreigners,
And take charge of their urns.
And the fact that the Ukraine is stark naked . . .
Well, we are ashamed of our own craws,
We avoid carefully that garbage dump of ours—
The time of the Cossacks has long gone by,
And we are not a local product,
We, you could say, are even international.

Frustration with their national status can easily be detected in the poetry of the *shestydesyatnyky*. It varies significantly from the Russian development. Most interesting in this respect are Vasyl Symonenko's patriotic poetry and his *Diary*, which are widely circulated and much admired in the Ukraine. This *Diary* and his 'unofficial' poetry were published abroad last year (*Suchasnist*, 1/1965). The *Diary* covers the period from 18 September 1962 to 20 September 1963, and consists of thirteen entries. They reflect his political conflict with the Soviet Ukrainian literary establishment and his general critical view of Soviet affairs in the early 1960s. The Soviet authorities did not dispute the authenticity of Symonenko's writings as published abroad, but merely attacked their misuse and the anti-Soviet interpretations placed on them. These writings of Symonenko give us some insight into the attitudes of the young Ukrainian intelligentsia. Symonenko is a spokesman of the broad social aspirations of his fellow-writers; his poetry appeals directly to national sentiments and emotions, invoking familiar Ukrainian traditional images, as in his 'Swans of Motherhood', which says that a man can choose everything in the world except his native country.

Symonenko consciously uses poetical devices to make patriotic statements and declarations that have an almost evangelistic fervour. The Ukraine dominates the poet's imagination, and his lyrical poetry is infused with a distinctive social and political ideology. In a poem dedicated to his country, he writes:

Because of you I plant pearls in human souls,
Because of you I think and I create,
Let America and Russia be silent
When I am speaking with you . . .
Ukraine, you are my prayer,
You are my eternal despair . . .
A fierce battle is roaring in the world
For your life, and for your rights.

In some of his poems Symonenko attacks those he considers responsible for the growing despair and disillusionment of the common man. He condemns in particular the wrongs done to the peasants, whose helplessness and poverty is vividly portrayed. Coming from a peasant family

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in the Poltava region, he has a deep understanding of peasant life, whose reality had been concealed behind propaganda slogans. His social poetry is aimed at debunking official optimism. His own disillusionment, and his concern for the future of his country, must have influenced his social criticism. Obviously Symonenko was a potential rebel, and some of his writings are openly inflammatory, crying out for punishment of the oppressors and tyrants. Particularly the poem 'Granite Obelisks' is written in the Shevchenko tradition of social protest.

There are significant differences between the young Russian and the young Ukrainian in the present cultural ferment: the Russians tend to be more metropolitan, urban, concentrating on day-to-day issues, and on the whole in agreement with the official interpretation of Russian history before Lenin; the Ukrainians, while also stressing contemporary issues, seem to be more historically oriented and frustrated about their national status. They use the anniversaries of prominent Ukrainian writers of the past, or general discussions of their works, as a vehicle for their national dissatisfaction; and they often come out with their own interpretations of Ukrainian intellectual and political history. On the fiftieth anniversary of the death of the Ukrainian poet Lesya Ukrainka, in August 1963, two interesting literary critics, Ivan Dzyuba and Ivan Svitlychny, extolled her patriotic virtues and stressed her sorrow at the indifference of her countrymen to Ukrainian affairs, their lack of national will and political awareness. Svitlychny in particular praised her strong stand against those whom she regarded as renegades from the national cause. Even more striking was Dzyuba's recent reinterpretation of Taras Shevchenko's historical ideas in an article entitled 'The cleansing and life-giving Fire', printed in *Duklya* (1/1965), a Ukrainian-language journal published in Czechoslovakia. Dzyuba analysed Shevchenko's concepts of 'national shame' and 'national self-criticism' from a Marxist position. At the same time he emphasised that Shevchenko developed the concept of two Ukraines: one Ukraine being the representation of national virtues, and another Ukraine the embodiment of servility and moral decay. Such a reinterpretation of Shevchenko's intellectual significance goes beyond the usual Soviet explanation which is designed to prove Shevchenko's political dependence on progressive Russian writers and his proto-communist inclinations. Dzyuba puts Shevchenko into his Ukrainian context and projects the poet as one who strove for a national awakening, who castigated those of his countrymen who failed in national self-respect and dignity, and praised those who loved and respected their country. There are many who have reservations about the populist and patriotic strains in Dzyuba's essay, but there can be no doubt that this talented young critic placed national values above the usual Marxist criteria.

AMONG those who have been criticised by the party is Sava Holovanivsky, a poet and writer of the middle generation. Podgorny, pointing to the 'failure' of Holovanivsky's play 'The Truth

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is Dearer', remarked that the author 'in recent years has been searching for images of contemporaries in his works, remote from the heroic work of the builders of communism, with their moral purity and social inspiration'. A second offence on Holovanivsky's part was his dissatisfaction with the official position in Soviet society of the writer, who is usually regarded as 'a servant of the people'. In a literary discussion in the Kharkov journal *Prapor* (12/1962), Holovanivsky expressed some unorthodox views in the article 'Thermometer for Talent'. The lines for which he was called to order read as follows:

> There was a time when the writer was told to serve. Usually he was called a servant of the people. But 'servant' is not only humiliating to the person who is called this; it is strikingly out of keeping with the spirit of equality in socialist society. The servant must predict and know beforehand the aims of the masters, he must flatter them and blindly execute their will. In our country the master is the people. The writer is a part of them and cannot be a servant.

Holovanivsky is an acknowledged *enfant terrible* of contemporary Soviet literary life. In 1958 he was severely reprimanded for his poem 'Operation', in which he compared the official critics with surgeons who perform a 'moral' operation. He was also criticised for the belief that Soviet Ukrainian literature is still strongly influenced by peasant elements, by primitivism and *khutoryanstvo* (farmstead mentality).

Holovanivsky is one of a group of Soviet Ukrainian intellectuals of Jewish origin (among the others are Leonid Pervomaisky, Natan Rybak, and M. D. Bernshtein); he had spoken of Baby Yar long before the publication of Yevtushenko's poem. Some members of this group have sponsored Ukrainian cultural demands with a good deal of persistence. The position of intellectuals of Jewish origin who commit themselves to a non-Russian culture in the Soviet Union (a minority within a minority) is in itself a highly interesting problem which so far has not received the necessary attention.

Leonid Pervomaisky, not only a poet in his own right but also a skilful translator of Lorca into Ukrainian, is an accomplished prose-writer as well. His novel *Wild Honey* (1962) can be very favourably compared with the work of his generation of Ukrainian writers. It traces the experiences of an individual life during the period of Stalin's terror, in wartime, and up to the recent past. The heroine, Varvara Knyazhych, is a patriotic newspaper photographer during the war. Before the war her life companion and father of her child was arrested by the security police and later liquidated. While on an assignment at the front she falls in love with another man who is killed in action. Although typical of the hard lives of millions of Soviet women, this novel is a moving account of the unsuccessful search for happiness of one individual human being. Although it does not venture on any dangerous social ground, it showed for the first time since the 1930s an overriding concern with the genuinely human qualities of man.

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The 1963 campaign against ideological aberrations was not the first of its kind after 1956. Early in 1957 several writers (A. Malyshko, M. Shumylo, and V. Shvets) were condemned for deviations from the party's nationalities policies and for alleged provocative statements against the friendship of nations in the Soviet Union. In 1958 another wave of criticism followed, directed against Pervomaisky, Holovanivsky, Lina Kostenko, and Shvets. Some of those under attack submitted and returned to their timid exercises in socialist realism and provincial patriotism. Malyshko's talent has been completely ruined by sentimentalism and nostalgia. Others reacted differently. Lina Kostenko is one of those who simply refuses to accept directives from above, and prefers silent resistence. She expressed her credo in no uncertain terms:

. . . One can go straight forward, risking one's life,
As a fanatic, but not as a maniac.
It's only pitiful to go on balancing.
It is also humiliating to go on balancing!
One should go straight forward—or not at all.

Often it is difficult to obtain a full picture of the reaction among the young writers to the party's criticism, because even official Soviet accounts show obvious discrepancies. The regime uses various means to discourage those who advance demands for more freedom and who attempt to awaken national consciousness among the students and the young intelligentsia. Some of the more outspoken representatives of the cultural ferment were barred from the pages of the 'thick journals', others were dismissed from their jobs and cut off from professional work.

There are unconfirmed reports that several leading intellectuals were arrested in Kiev and Lvov last year. If this is so, it means that 'administrative methods' are used whenever the party feels that the 'limits' have been reached. In some cases, Ukrainian party officials are more royalist than the king; in their fear of losing control over the situation, they demand harsher intervention than Moscow thinks advisable. However, those writers who are willing to make some adjustments escape punishment and their works are even published. Such adjustments can be detected in Ivan Drach's last collection of poems, *Protuberances of the Heart*.

ONE talented newcomer to the literary scene is Vasyl Holoborodko, only twenty years old. This beginner seems to be searching for different forms of expression from those used by the *shestydesyatnyky*. While theirs is a more philosophical and social approach, Holoborodko turns to the soul, to the most personal experience, to the little irrational facts of life, and to nature. His poetry (published for the first time in *Dnipro*, 7/1964) is strictly non-political and non-intellectual. It is permeated with a kind of animism which may be understood as a protest against our technological civilisation and its rationalist extremes. This interpretation was offered by Ivan Dzyuba in a perceptive essay dealing with Holoborodko's poetry ('In the Magic World of the Native Home',

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Dnipro, 4/1965). Holoborodko's first collection of poems, entitled 'The Little Flying Window', has been submitted for publication. The young poet likes to operate with modern poetic devices; he tries to capture the 'lost' moments of life, as in his poem 'The Head':

The head was already rolling,
like a water-melon, a bloody human head.
And unconscious wives and sisters were falling
and they spread out long hands on the ground
and on these hands
as if they were white towels
people were following the head
and they rustled
like black mourning-weeds.

All these new developments seem to indicate that the official doctrine of socialist realism does not appeal to the younger generation of writers and poets. Some of them seem to have serious doubts concerning the dogmatic propositions of the official Marxist teaching. There are some indications that in more relaxed circumstances their own Marxism would be more open-minded, more humane, and less dogmatic. An interesting poem by Drach entitled 'God', which is supposed to be read as a 'joke', is quite revealing in this respect:

. . . And God came to him, and scattered
his books, and asked him: When are you going to live my son?
Is all this a life?
—I shall remain silent, my God,—he said.—
Reveal to me only,
how you succeed to put into orbit
such a tremendous fly-wheel—this planet of ours, and
tens and billions of others. How do you live
without planetary strikes and crises, where did you
obtain such energy—since all star mechanisms operate
so efficiently and regularly,
and first of all, my God, how come you were not intoxicated
by people and angels with a cult of your personality?
God was a Marxist and replied:
—I always had my doubts, dear son.

This version of the poem is quoted from a Czech anthology of contemporary Soviet Ukrainian poetry published in Prague in 1965. In the same poem published in the collection *Protuberances of the Heart*, the words 'God was a Marxist' are omitted.

Vasyl Symonenko's *Diary* suggests that disillusionment with the transformation of Marxism into a semi-religious belief, an ideology with absolute claims, goes much deeper than official comment would indicate. A comment by Symonenko on one of his own works, 'Roses in Mourning', speaks for itself.

> I am speaking against the new religion, against hypocrites who attempt, not without success, to transform Marxism into a religion,

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> into a Procrustean bed for science, for the arts, and for love. We have these sad examples with cybernetics, genetics, the rapid growth of 'poisonous mushrooms' in literature and painting, external exhortations to sacrifices and promises of 'a future paradise'—are all these things so far away from the tragedies of Bruno and Galileo, from the writing of psalms and painting of icons, from monasteries and the heavenly kingdom? If Marxism does not stand up to this violent attack of dogmatism, it is doomed to become a religion. No teaching whatsoever should dare to monopolise the intellectual life of humanity.

It is of course impossible to predict the final outcome of this cultural and at the same time socio-political ferment in the Soviet Ukrainian Republic. There are too many unknown factors. What will be the attitude of those Ukrainian intellectuals who are not directly connected with national cultural aspirations? Will this limited cultural revival attract broader interests, and, if so, will it influence students and young people to such a degree that they will be more attached to Ukrainian than to Russian culture? Is this development of the 1960s irreversible, or can the party suppress the more daring minds and channel their demands into ethnographic and provincial outlets, as was done in the 1930s? Can Ukrainian intellectuals learn more about developments in the West, and, by doing so, move beyond Ukrainian ethnographic interests, or will they continue to regard Russian culture as the only model of cultural growth and achievement?

The answers depend on many factors, the wishes of the Ukrainian intellectual community being only one, and not the most decisive. Their opportunities depend to a large degree on international developments, on the internal trends in the Soviet Union, and in particular on Soviet nationality policies. The chances for the growth of a modernised Ukrainian culture, the success or failure of Ukrainian cultural aspirations are tightly linked to the broader tendencies and decisions within the USSR as a whole.

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VIEWS AND REVIEWS

UKRAINA

Ze'ev Ben-Shlomo

OURS IS THE AGE of post-nationalism in Europe and of a powerful new wave of nationalism in other parts of the world. While in Western Europe nationalism in the classical sense appears to be giving way to regional associations there are still nationalist movements in Central and Eastern Europe which preserve their socio-political dynamic.

The Ukraine is an outstanding case in point. A German observer might call its nationalism *ein nicht ausgelebter Nationalismus*, since it has not yet succeeded in passing through all the 'normal' stages of a national movement which reaches its goal of political sovereignty or in attaining a degree of integration of the Ukrainians in the nation's social structure. The Ukraine and Ukrainian nationalism provide the theme of two books published recently in the United States and Canada.*

Ukraine: A Concise Encyclopaedia is an impressive summing-up of a vast body of research work undertaken by two generations of scholars in the Soviet Ukraine, in Galicia till 1939, and in the Ukrainian emigration in the West. Dr Bilinsky's monograph is a pioneer work, dealing with some aspects of Ukrainian nationalism after the second world war, and with Moscow's policy towards the Ukraine. Both are interesting contributions by Ukrainian scholars to English publications about their homeland. Both bear the imprint of Ukrainian nationalism in its traditional form, which dominates the Ukrainian emigration in the West. Dr. Bilinsky's attitude differs from that of his older colleagues, for his academic background is American.

The encyclopaedia is a revised and substantially enlarged version of the three-volume *Encyclopaedia Ukrainoznavstva*, published in Ukrainian in 1949 by the Shevchenko Scientific Society of New York. This body is the oldest Ukrainian scientific institute, established in 1873 in Lviv (Lwow) in a period which coincided with the beginnings of Ukrainian nationalism as a mass movement. Its basic aim has remained unchanged although there are marked differences in attitudes and influences from one generation to another.

The Ukrainian national movement produced its best leaders before the short-lived Ukrainian Republic of 1917. Professor Mykhailo Hrushevsky, Andry Novitzky, and their associates were democrats and realists. The first, an eminent scholar, proclaimed president of the Ukrainian Republic in 1917, might in more favourable circumstances have risen to the stature of a Masaryk. This opportunity was missed,

* **Ukraine: A Concise Encyclopaedia,** Vol. I, Ed. Volodymyr Kubijovic, University of Toronto Press, 1963, 1185 pp.
Yaroslav Bilinsky, The Second Soviet Republic: The Ukraine after World War II, Rutgers University Press, 1964, 539 pp.

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Dr Bilinsky explains, because the Ukrainian leaders committed several mistakes. Unlike Lenin, who knew how to ride the tides of popular passions whenever this suited his ulterior purposes, Ukrainian nationalists did not dare to endorse the peasants taking over the land until the Bolsheviks had stolen their thunder.

The end of those moderate Ukrainian leaders was a tragic one. Hrushevsky and Novitzky returned to the Ukraine in the twenties only to meet their death there. In Galicia the moderates gradually lost ground to a new generation of leaders hypnotised by the success of Nazi Germany. Here again Dr Bilinsky bears witness:

> The [Polish] repressions frustrated repeated efforts on the part of moderate Ukrainian elements to come to a mutual understanding with the Polish authorities. They only played into the hands of nationalist extremists who, with encouragement from circles of Nazi Germany . . . engaged in terroristic activities on a considerable scale. By 1939 the extremists had probably captured the allegiance of the majority of the Ukrainian youth in Galicia (p. 5).

This was only the prelude to disaster. The price of Nazi influence and of subsequent collaboration was high indeed, even though in 1943 Ukrainian nationalists began an anti-nazi as well as an anti-communist fight. 'Of all the unhappy chapters in the history of Ukrainian nationalism, World War II and its aftermath provides the most unhappy', wrote the *Times Literary Supplement* (5 November 1964). Given the geo-political situation of the Ukraine, there could be no other outcome, and possible changes may be regarded as *Realpolitik* only within the general framework of evolution of the Soviet system. The bankruptcy of an entire generation of leaders is a heavy burden for the Ukrainian national movement in emigration to bear.

IS IT POSSIBLE TO SPEAK of a new stage in the Ukrainian national movement in emigration? Does the growth of nationalism in the Soviet Ukraine indicate that developments within the Soviet bloc may strengthen its independence? It would be premature to answer those questions though they figure in the background of both publications, especially Dr Bilinsky's.

The poets and intellectuals of an older generation, like Rylsky, Bazhan, Sosiura, still influence the younger generation, and some of Hrushevsky's associates are still alive, but their political and spiritual influence is declining. On the other hand, publications like Dr Bilinsky's show that in the West a new generation of Ukrainian scholars and intellectuals is making its mark, and may be regarded as the true heirs of the democratic nationalism of Hrushevsky as opposed to the authoritarian extremism of Bandera and Melnyk.

The chief editor of the *Encyclopaedia* explains that it is intended for the Ukrainian Diaspora in the West, as a source of information for non-Ukrainians, and thirdly that it is aimed at potential Ukrainian readers in the USSR, to provide them with information about the

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Ukraine's present and past which has been ignored or distorted in the Soviet Union. It is to a certain degree also planned as an answer to the second edition of the 50-volumes *Bolshaya Sovetskaya Entsiklopediya* 'in which the information about the Ukraine is both inadequate and largely false'. The present work—the first foreign language edition of the Ukrainian text, and the first volume of the two planned—is clearly aimed at the American reader of Ukrainian origin, still keenly interested in things Ukrainian, but above all the non-Ukrainian western reader and at the Sovietologists of all western countries. It is from this point of view that it should be judged.

It must be said at the outset that both in the organisation of a huge mass of material and, with a few regrettable exceptions, in the content, the encyclopaedia deserves the high praise it has earned. The editors have managed to present an immense amount of material in such clear outline that, despite its 1,185 pages, the reader has no difficulty in finding the topics. The arrangement is not alphabetical, as is customary. Rather the volume is a collection of essays by different scholars, some short, others comprehensive monographs. Except in a few places, where political bias and a misconception of nationalism introduce distortions, the essays are authoritative and scholarly.

The section on the history of the Ukraine covers about a third of the whole book; the sections on population and ethnography fill more than 380 pages. Literature has 250 pages and language 90 pages. The index takes up 85 pages. The sections on natural history are a mine of information, and even here, on themes so remote from current controversies, the volume fills in many gaps left in Soviet sources. Since 1959 a Soviet Ukrainian encyclopaedia is in course of publication, of which more than ten volumes have so far appeared; it is remarkably 'liberal' compared with the *Large Soviet Encyclopaedia*. Written by Ukrainian intellectuals in the heyday of decentralisation and on a rising tide of Ukrainian patriotism, it reaches as high a degree of local nationalism as can be expected.

It is largely in regard to history, sociology, language and literature, that the encyclopaedia under review serves as an independent reference work, providing information not available from other sources. In particular, the bibliographies which follow every chapter and section summarise a whole epoch of Ukrainian research. Unfortunately, some of the crucial problems of Ukrainian history are not treated with due objectivity. Compared with this, Dr Bilinsky's monograph, though sometimes a little dry, may be regarded as an important contribution in the spirit of true scholarship.

ON THE STATUS OF UKRAINIANS in the Soviet Union Dr Bilinsky gives full weight to the changes since 1953. Since Stalin's death, he writes in the Preface, the Ukrainian people have shown a political assertiveness unequalled except during the relatively liberal 1920s. He also discusses the advancement of members of the Ukrainian party apparatus on the

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Union level, so marked after 1953, and the high position of some Ukrainians in the army command. One may add here the rehabilitation of Ukrainian artists and writers purged in the thirties, and the ferment among the Ukrainian intelligentsia, which is demanding more concessions from Moscow to its national and cultural aspirations. This is scarcely reflected at all in the encyclopaedia, published ten years after this process had started. The essay on the Ukraine, 1945–62, mentions the ferment among the intellectuals and concludes that 'in 1962, the Ukrainian cultural resistance movement was clearly gaining momentum' (p. 911). It also notes the impact of revisionism and of national-communist Poland on the thinking of many Soviet Ukrainians, but the treatment of the rehabilitation of Ukrainian writers is inadequate.

The proof of a scholar's objectivity is the way he deals with the dubious parts of his national heritage. The second world war left a black mark on Ukrainian-Polish relations because of the mass slaughter of the Polish population in Volhynia (and to a lesser extend in Galicia) in 1943 and 1944 by members of the Ukrainian Insurgent Army (UPA). These units, a Polish historian writes, 'tolerated by the Germans and becoming a serious force, since they absorbed . . . entire battalions of local Ukrainian police forces, created and equipped by the Germans, started in the spring of 1943 a barbarous "struggle" against the unarmed Polish population, first in Volhynia, then in the Lvov district too. They changed the old slogan of the OUN (Organisation of Ukrainian Nationalists) "Poles away behind the San river" into a ruthless order "to purge Ukrainian territory of the non-Ukrainian population"' (Wladyslaw Pobog-Malinowski, *Najnowsza Historia Polityczna Polski* (Polish Modern Political History), 1864–1945, Vol. 3: 1939–1945, London, 1960, pp. 328). The number of victims, according to this source, ran into the thousands. The same accusations re-appear in the official history of the Polish Army, including the underground Home Army (cf. *Polskie Sily Zbrojne w Drugiej Wojnie Swiatowej*, Vol. III, London, 1950, pp. 50, 584).

The Ukrainian Encyclopaedia has nothing to say on this. The pages (884–5) dealing with the situation in Volhynia in 1943 do not mention it, while the section on Galicia says only that 'at the same time, bloody clashes occurred between the Ukrainians and Poles in Galicia, and especially in the southern Kholm area. As as result, Western Ukraine blazed up in a war of all against all. Despite the greatest efforts of the Ukrainian Central Committee, the Ukrainian bishops, and the most influential circles of the Ukrainian community, peace could not be restored' (p. 889).

The authors of *Polskie Sily Zbrojne* say that the slaughter aroused only a weak protest from moderate Ukrainians, although Metropolitan Szeptycki condemned it. On the other hand, it seems that in Volhynia and Galicia the slaughter was *mutual*; nevertheless, it was the Polish civil population, almost without arms, which suffered the heaviest casualties.

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Dr Bilinsky's analysis of the ideological changes in the OUN from the fascist-like pattern with its Führer-Prinzip of the inter-war years is a balanced contribution on a theme not dealt with before in English. On the Volhynia slaughter he says only that 'This is not the place to ascertain who fired the first shot—the Ukrainians or the Poles—but it is a well-attested fact that in the spring of that year the two nationalities started to slaughter each other on a grand scale'.

The silence of the *Encyclopaedia* on this question is not the only example of its evasion of ticklish subjects. It also ignores the extermination of about 250,000 Ukrainian Jews in the Khmelnytzky revolt—the greatest mass murder of Jews before Hitler. All it says is that under the treaty of Zborov (1649) Jews and Jesuits were forbidden to live in the Cossack-dominated Ukraine. This revolt and Khmelnytzky's policy towards Moscow have become a major battlefield between Ukrainian nationalist historians in the West and Russian historians in the Soviet Union. Dr Bilinsky deals with them in his chapter on Soviet interpretations of Ukrainian history. The Ukrainian historians object—not without reason—to the Soviet distortion of Ukrainian history and the evaluation of Khmelnytzky's role in a way that favours the 'big (Russian) brother' concept.

The omission is the more instructive, because the *Encyclopaedia* is meticulous in details. It even mentions special studies on the assimilation of Jews with the Ukrainians, particularly in the Zaporozhian Host. The fact that Jews served in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries as scribes and artisans with the Zaporozhian cossacks is not devoid of interest. But it is a marginal phenomenon in both Jewish and Ukrainian history, while Khmelnytzky's revolt is a crucial turning-point in both.

COMINTERN

Alexander Dallin

THE FINAL VOLUME IN THE SERIES of Comintern documents,[1] issued under the auspices of Chatham House, covers a period longer than its two predecessors—it spans the years from the 'ultra-leftist' line to the dissolution of the International in 1943.

The editing of communist documents is by no means a mechanical job, and perhaps only those who have tried their hand at it can fully appreciate the difficulties involved, such as the collation and comparison of variant editions and translations. Mrs Degras has done a superb job of selecting and editing. One would of course have expected no less: at the risk of being ungentlemanly, one must call her an old hand at this sort of work.

[1] **The Communist International 1919–1943 Documents.** Volume III: 1929–1943. Selected and Edited by Jane Degras. London: Oxford University Press, 1965. 90s.

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The documents are by their very nature inadequate to convey a full image of the Comintern's life and death. This is particularly true of this volume, for after 1928 there was scarcely any dissent expressed within (or reported by) the International. Thus, for all their value, the documents can give us little insight into either the national variations, party by party, or the individual drama of men successively attracted and repelled by the movement during the 'Red Decade'. Nor can they shed much light on the open questions of scholarship on the Comintern. To list but a few examples:

> The replacement of the 'ultra-leftist' line by the united-front policy. This began long before the Seventh World Congress, and some parties, such as the French, most obviously jumped the gun. Given the organisation and discipline of the Comintern, how was this possible?
>
> The personalities, politics, and purges at the top of the International. Why was there no president after 1928? Why was the Seventh Congress postponed from 1934 to 1935? What happened to Wang Ming? Who was ECCI member 'Moskvin' (Ypsilon suggested he was an NKVD man)? What was Bukharin's role in the 1930s, e.g. when the Spanish Civil War broke out?
>
> The dynamics of inter-party relations. How did the Comintern and Soviet contacts with other communist parties vary over the years—e.g. with the Chinese, throughout the 1930s; with the Yugoslavs and Poles during the second world war?

Precisely because the documents have inherent limitations, the editor was wise to supply more extensive notes and introductions than in the earlier volumes. Having stuck to official Comintern materials for the documentation (and refraining from the use even of captured German and Japanese documents, of memoirs, and of recent Soviet publications), she more than makes up for this rigour in her annotations, which this reader found often to be considerably more valuable than the documents themselves, which, especially after the Sixth Congress, become painfully dull, repetitive mouthings of Stalinist jargon.

Yet the materials are more instructive than one might have thought, particularly on the oft-forgotten 'third period'—that peculiarly Stalinist alloy of logic and lunacy. There was logic, after all, in the natural recoil from the failures of the earlier united-front policy and in the uses of an extremist stand in Stalin's struggle against the 'right'. It was also logical that during a period of Soviet weakness due to radical changes within the country (industrialisation and collectivisation), Soviet diplomacy should be 'moderate' to the point of appeasement, while the communist parties abroad must be 'ultra-leftist' so as to disrupt the enemy's rear and prevent any move against the USSR. Yet precisely here was the lunacy apparent: not only in a gross exaggeration of the opportunities open to the communists abroad, but more generally in a perception of world politics ludicrously at variance with the facts.

Stalin (in addition to using it in intra-party politics) evidently persuaded himself that the danger of foreign invasion was real, and the Comintern provided the requisite chorus and obbligato to the Soviet chants. Communists spoke of Gandhi as a 'police agent of British

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imperialism'. The International seriously appealed to the Negroes of the American South for 'self-determination' of the Black Belt. This was the time when the obsessive diatribes against 'social-fascists' contrasted so strikingly with the facile optimism dispensed by the Comintern and its German minions about the future of Nazism. As Franz Borkenau once wrote, 'It is truly remarkable how little importance reality had for the communists at that stage'.

Manuilsky told the ECCI in 1931 that 'only a bourgeois liberal can accept the view that there is a contradiction between bourgeois democracy and a fascist regime, that these two political forms are different in principle'. Stalin's earlier *obiter dictum*—that social-democracy and fascism were 'not antipodes but twins'—was repeated *ad nauseam*. To consider the socialists a lesser evil than Hitler, the German communists announced, was 'the most serious danger for the party', and Heinz Neumann was deprived of his post as candidate member of the ECCI Presidium for holding such a view. Even in mid-1932 the prospect of Hitler's coming to power did not disturb the comrades, for, as they put it, 'the essential thing is that the November [i.e. Weimar] Republic has run its course . . .'. And three months before the Nazis took over, the Comintern organ confirmed that the task of the Berlin communists 'remains, as before, to direct the chief blow, at the present stage, against social-democracy'.[2]

From the vanguard of the revolution, the Comintern (as Trotsky put it) had become the border guard of the Soviet state—one, we should add, on which Stalin scarcely relied. The remarkable thing is not how much help Moscow provided for the other parties but how little it did. It let down one section after the other—the German, the Spanish, the Chinese. As Mrs Degras correctly writes, 'It is difficult to avoid the conclusion that the Soviet leaders had lost interest in the Comintern long before they brought it to an end'. Djilas' report of what Dimitrov told him fully supports this view. After the Seventh Congress not even the ECCI seems to have functioned properly. (It remains for Italian and French communists to prove their recent contention that the various parties were in 1935 given greater latitude in individual policy-making.)

Stalin wrote off the International as a force: this suited the view that 'one tractor is worth more than ten foreign communists'. It was also convenient when Moscow sought closer relations, first with the West, and then with Berlin. Many of these attitudes and many of the developments around the Comintern were of course not uniquely Stalinist. The priority of Soviet state interests over those of foreign revolutions was born in Lenin's days. Loyalty to Moscow as the acid test of communist orthodoxy remains valid in current Soviet pronouncements. In turn, students of contemporary communism will find instructive the evidence on continuity of jargon and intellectual categories—be it on 'changing correlations of forces' or on the arguments over 'exceptionalism' vs. 'multiple paths'.

The Comintern was a dismal failure. It turned out to be neither the

[2] Additional documentation from *Inprekorr* is now available in another documentary collection: Theo Pirker, ed., *Komintern und Faschismus* (Stuttgart, 1965).

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vehicle of world liberation which its followers, nor the dispenser of doom which its enemies, had expected it to be. As Jane Degras convincingly shows in her preface, it needs further study and scholarship. And anyone now proceeding to work on its history and impact will wish to take these volumes as his point of departure and guide.

KHRUSHCHEV'S CROP POLICY

W. K.

ONCE MORE JASNY has devoted a year of his life to Soviet farming, the subject with which his name will always be associated. Although this critical analysis of Khrushchev's crop policy * was completed at the time of the central committee plenum on agriculture held in March 1964, it reached the reading public only a year after Khrushchev's fall from power. Had the Soviet leader had in time the benefit of this erudite assessment of the principal errors in his choice of arable plants, crop rotation, and farm prices—and had he been willing to draw the conclusions which he drew so readily when the errors of others were brought to his notice—Soviet farming might well be in a better state today than in fact it is. Khrushchev's departure from the scene has neither invalidated Jasny's findings nor reduced his book to a mere volume of historical reminiscences. On the contrary, Soviet agriculture still shows all the signs of suffering from the mistakes made during Khrushchev's rule, to say nothing of the errors committed before that time. Those concerned with the change of farm policy today would do well to study carefully what this most experienced of analysts of the Soviet agricultural scene has to say in his latest book. Nearer home, the Western scholar should regard it as an essential supplement to Jasny's earlier writings. Anybody trying to understand the last ten years of Soviet economic development had better consider it compulsory reading.

When, more than fifteen years ago, Jasny published *The Socialized Agriculture of the USSR*, he dedicated it to those in Soviet Russia who believed in the truth, unvarnished and untarnished. He has always addressed himself to that audience; to seek the truth and nothing but the truth has always been to him what his friend Dr Richter called in the *Festschrift* in honour of the octogenarian, 'a veritable gospel'. Jasny adjusted the exaggerated Soviet claims, based on the concept of the 'biological yield', to that of the 'barn yield', by which crops are measured everywhere else in the world. When Khrushchev, accusing Stalin and Malenkov of statistical distortion, eventually released a set of revised data, Jasny was more than confirmed in his earlier findings. Unhappily, Khrushchev himself soon engaged in a new form of statistical distortion and thus saddled his successors with a legacy from which they have not yet freed themselves.

As Jasny stated in the introduction to his *Commentary* (1957) on

* Naum Jasny, **Khrushchev's Crop Policy** (Glasgow, 1965).

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the first reference book published after two decades of statistical black-out, he does not attempt to minimise Soviet achievements, but to examine the impossibly large rates of growth claimed in official sources. This is as true of his latest analysis of Soviet policy as it was of his earlier works. When Jasny published his study of *Soviet Industrialisation* (1961) and his *Essays on the Soviet Economy* (1962), one might have thought that he had completed his life's work; but far from it. He followed every step of Soviet farm policy throughout the ten years of Khrushchev's rule. His latest book reads like a long list of footnotes to this era, grouped under such headings as summer fallow, hay, oats, potatoes, pulses, sugar beet, and—most important of all—maize. Khrushchev regarded this plant as the Queen of all field crops; he relied upon it more than on any other as the panacea for all the ills of farming. It probably contributed more than any other item of his varied programme to his ultimate downfall.

The book makes no easy reading, and the non-professional reader may well abandon it as over-specialised; but farming is a highly specialised affair. It is thus easily misjudged by the non-specialist. How is one to interpret otherwise the many expressions of optimism, in the face of obvious setbacks, by students of Soviet affairs who are perfectly capable of weighing achievements against failures in the non-agricultural sectors of Soviet society?

One of the great virtues of the book is that it compares, at every stage, Soviet and non-Soviet performance. On summer fallow Jasny says: 'Khrushchev would be well advised to familiarize himself with fallowing in Canada, large parts of which show particularly great similarity with large parts of the USSR' (p. 37). This point was made last year in another valuable study, comparing the virgin lands of the *Tselinny kray* of Kazakhstan and the prairie areas of Saskatchewan in Canada (*Studies on the Soviet Union*, Munich 1964, p. 43). It led to the obvious conclusion that at least 40 per cent of the dry farming area of the *Tselinny kray* ought to be in fallow each year. Jasny confirms this view. The neglect of annual grasses and perennial leguminous fodder crops, and disregard for the special feeding qualities of oats, of which the animal nutritionists speak in almost lyrical tones, are among the chief causes of the continuous failure of Soviet livestock farming. Here again Jasny's international comparisons help put matters in their proper perspective. The international cost comparison shows the waste that lies in growing, for feeding purposes, sugar beet, a high cost and low protein crop, rather than fodder beet or barley. The low protein content of most feeding stuffs used in the Soviet Union is at the root of low milk yields and low carcass weights. This applies, of course, especially to maize, particularly when it is harvested before it is ripe and is turned into a rather unpalatable silage fodder. 'Hence large amounts of protein supplement are needed for an efficient animal husbandry', says Jasny (p. 188). Khrushchev discovered the significance of plant protein for the production of animal protein only when it was too late to restore a balanced crop rotation and livestock economy. At the end of his rule maize and sugar beet for feed absorbed almost all the mineral fertiliser left after the needs of technical crops had been met. No wonder that the animal diet lacked protein.

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By giving chapter and verse throughout his international comparisons, Jasny provides one of the few yardsticks available with which to measure success and failure of farming anywhere in the world, the Soviet Union not excluded. It remains for the reviewer of this book to express the hope that a similarly thorough compendium on Russia's livestock industry, containing international comparisons, may one day supplement Jasny's analysis of the crop pattern.

The publishers give no date of publication and provide no index. This seems regrettable and might be remedied in any future publications of the Institute of Soviet and East European Studies at the University of Glasgow, under whose auspices Jasny's book has been published.

DEMOGRAPHY IN POLAND AND CZECHOSLOVAKIA

Jiri Kolaja

THIS NOTE is based upon a survey of two volumes each of the Polish and the Czechoslovak demographic journals, for the years 1963 and 1965. Before describing the journals, it may be useful to give a brief account of contemporary Polish and Czechoslovak demography.

Though in both countries demography had a sound tradition, it was not until many years after the end of the war that the subject was organised as a separate scientific discipline. On 15 March 1961 a Committee on the Demographic Sciences was set up in Poland, associated with the department of Social Sciences of the Polish Academy of Sciences. The chairman of the Committee was Edward Szturm de Sztrem, a former director of the Central Statistical Office.

The Czechoslovak Demographic Society, founded on 22 April 1964, was associated with the Collegium of Geology-Geography of the Czechoslovak Academy of Sciences. A special Slovak Demographic Society, a constituent part of the national Czechoslovak society, was also formed. Frantisek Fajfr, a former director of the Czechoslovak Statistical Office, was appointed chairman of the society. In contrast to their dates of foundation, it was the Czechoslovak *Demografie* which appeared first, in March 1959, while the Polish *Studia Demograficzne* came out three years later. The Czechoslovak journal is published in 2,000 copies, the Polish in less than 1,000. (Perhaps the growing urgency of the Czechoslovak population situation accounts for this difference.)

Since 1962 a second demographic journal has appeared in Czechoslovakia, *Zpravy statni populacni komise* (News of the State Population Committee). Though circulated only among national committees and state offices, in a total print of 500–600 copies, the *News* contains a mass of research reports, dealing especially with policies directed at raising the reproduction rate of the Czechoslovak population. The Polish *Studia Demograficzne* comes out three times a year, each number

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containing about 125 pages. The Czechoslovak journal, with 96 pages, appears four times a year. Both journals give a summary of each article in Russian and English.

Studia Demograficzne publishes a fairly large number of methodological articles (four during the two years surveyed). In an article in the first issue for 1963 surveying trends in Polish demography, Edward Strzelecki notes the prominence of methodological studies since 1956, and refers to the migrations and other radical changes in Poland as reflected in the censuses of 1946, 1950, and 1960. Only the last of these, and its demographic implications, was discussed publicly. In a country with a national plan of development, demography becomes a basic science, the point of departure for more complex studies using other social sciences.

Outstanding among the articles in the 1963 volumes are comparative studies on marriages and their relation to the growth of population, by the editor of the journal, Edward Rosset. He explains the lower marriage age—valid for other countries too—after the war as a function of greater employment opportunities. There were six articles dealing with foreign countries, three about the Soviet Union and Marx, and three on historical problems of the Polish population. Studies of regions (three articles) and women in industry (two articles) come next.

In the Czechoslovak *Demografie* the articles are much shorter; thirteen were concerned with motherhood and working women or mothers. Historical population studies, mostly of Bohemia, were the subject of nine articles. There were seven articles on foreign countries, and two on Marxist topics. Given that Marxist philosophy plays a larger part in Czechoslovak life than in Polish, it is a pleasant surprise to find that these are free of clumsy Marxist vocabulary. In particular, the discussion of the definition of the boundaries of demography, opened by Frantisek Fajfr (1963, no. 3), and continuing through several issues, was not burdened with irrelevant political concepts. Most authors were agreed that demography is concerned with the problem of population growth. Fajfr's definition was in fact sociological; his definition of population as an organised collective possessing a collective consciousness, could as well be replaced by the concept of group. Moreover, he stressed the individuality of each population collective.

The two journals pay a good deal of attention to each other, both in the way of giving news, and in publishing articles about the other country by its demographers. One reason for this is that Polish and Czechoslovak demographers organised a joint Polish-Czechoslovak demographic symposium in September 1961, in Smolenice, Czechoslovakia, and in May 1962 in Jablonna, Poland. At both conferences the implications of the differential growth of the Polish as compared to the Czechoslovak population were the main topics. At present, for example, one-third of the Polish population is under the age of 15, and it is expected that the productive age population will by 1980 be increased by one million. On the other hand, although it has the longest maternity paid leave in the world, in Czech lands (not Slovakia) reproduction is very low (in 1962 the net increase per 1,000 was 3·1), and there is a labour shortage in some sectors of the national economy. It is estimated that in agriculture, which traditionally exports its

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people to urban areas, the migration trend will have to be reversed if the annual demand for an influx of 40,000 new agricultural workers is to be met.

In both countries demographers are actively engaged in surveying selected categories of the population on such questions as time allocation, desires or plans as to the number of children, etc. Zygmunt Zaremba's study of the time allocation and cultural characteristics of Polish women (1964, no. 1—it was also published in the Czechoslovak journal) was based on a questionnaire returned by 5,708 women, dealing largely with their social characteristics and their cultural aspirations. A similar piece of research in Czechoslovakia was undertaken in November 1963 on 1,100 new marriages, of which it is expected that 30–40 per cent will end in divorce.[1] The research was concerned with the values and expectations of the young couples. Czechoslovak demography, faced with the country's reproduction problem and the social disorganisation of the family, has become deeply concerned in these less tangible and measurable items. Seminars are held with the object of raising the prestige and value of family life. Though the surveys dealing with attitudes leave much to be desired from the methodological angle, the size of the samples is certainly satisfactory.

[1] In 1961 there were 562,000 families without their own apartments in Czechoslovakia. A newly-wed couple, on the average, must wait for four years before they can get an apartment. Ibid, p. 70.

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Francois de Liencourt

François Henri Jean de Liencourt, who died in Paris in December 1965, was born in 1916, the son of a French general who, the same year, was killed at Verdun. His studies in law and political science at the Sorbonne were interrupted by his call-up in 1939—for four years he was a prisoner of war—and resumed after he was demobilised. He joined the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in 1945, and was made Chevalier de la Légion d'Honneur in 1953, served as Counsellor in Moscow 1954–57, then returned to Paris to become Sous-Directeur of the East-European Department at the Quai d'Orsay. In 1960, while remaining a member of the Ministry, he was seconded to the École des Hautes Études. There he was of outstanding service to Soviet studies in France, did much to promote closer cooperation between French and West European and American scholars, and was on the editorial board of *Cahiers du Monde Russe et Soviétique*. He was a contributor to *Survey* and took part in the Conference on Soviet Literature organised by *Survey* and by St. Antony's College at Oxford. He and his wife had many friends in England, of whom I was privileged to be one.

A liberal in politics, a devoted and clear-sighted patriot, and a friend of England, he had a deep sense of universal values and worked throughout his life for better international understanding. The quality which comes to my mind when I think of him is an immense generosity of mind and character which, even through the great suffering caused by his illness, never ceased to bring to others a stronger sense of the value of life and of friendship.

M. H.

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Boris Nicolaevsky

Boris Nicolaevsky was 78 when he died in February of this year in California. The son of a Russian priest, he belonged from his youth to the Russian revolutionary movement. He was arrested eight times and exiled three times to Siberia, from where he escaped twice. A life-long member of the Menshevik faction of the Russian Social-Democratic Party, he was arrested with its other leaders by the Soviet authorities in 1921, and after a year in prison expelled from the country. In Berlin he became and remained for the next 45 years a regular collaborator of the *Sotsialisticheskii Vestnik*, which recently ceased publication. He also worked for the Marx-Engels Institutes in Moscow and Berlin, and for the Amsterdam International Institute of Social History, for which he helped to save from the Nazis the German social-democratic archives. With O. Maenchen-Hellen he wrote a book on Marx, and with David Dallin a book on forced labour in Soviet Russia. He was also the author of a book on Azeff and the editor of six volumes of documents on the Russian revolutionary movement. A collection of his writings (including the celebrated 'Letter of an old Bolshevik') appeared recently in English. The last two years of his life were spent in Palo Alto. His archives and books are now in the Hoover Institution. Boris Nicolaevsky had an encyclopaedic knowledge of the history of socialism and of Soviet affairs. Being his neighbour for a year in New York, I had the chance of meeting him frequently and listening to his reminiscences. It was a fascinating experience. Boris Nicolaevsky was a friend of this journal and attended a conference on Soviet historiography organized by *Survey* and the *Institut de Hautes Etudes Internationales* in Geneva in 1961. His last written work appeared in a book on the Comintern edited by the director of that Institute, Professor Jacques Freymond, and published in 1965.

L. L.

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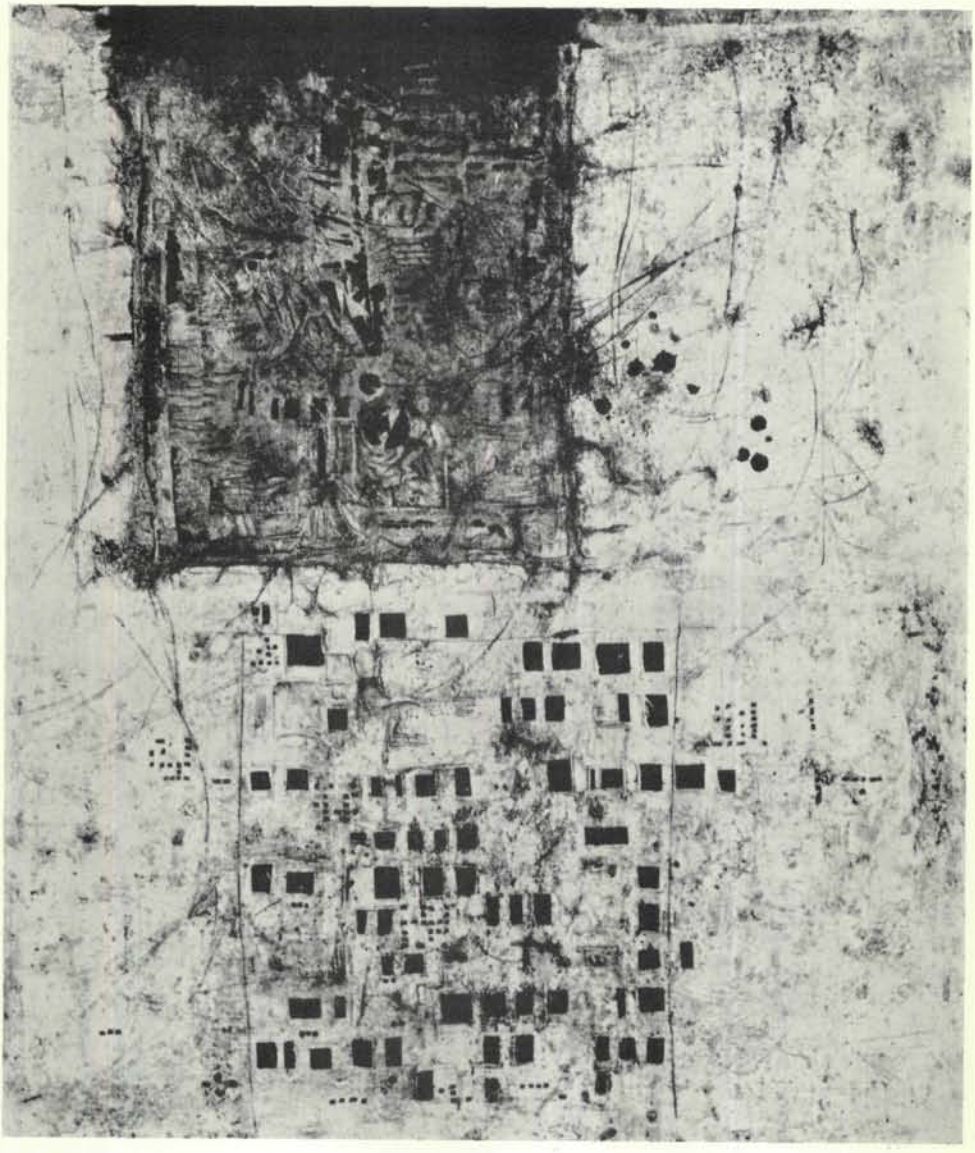

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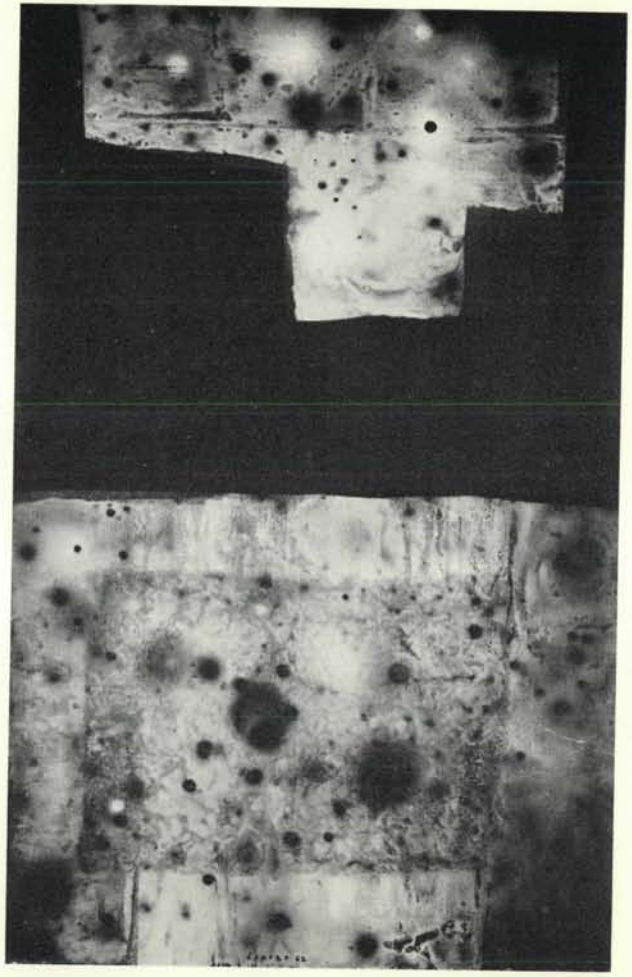

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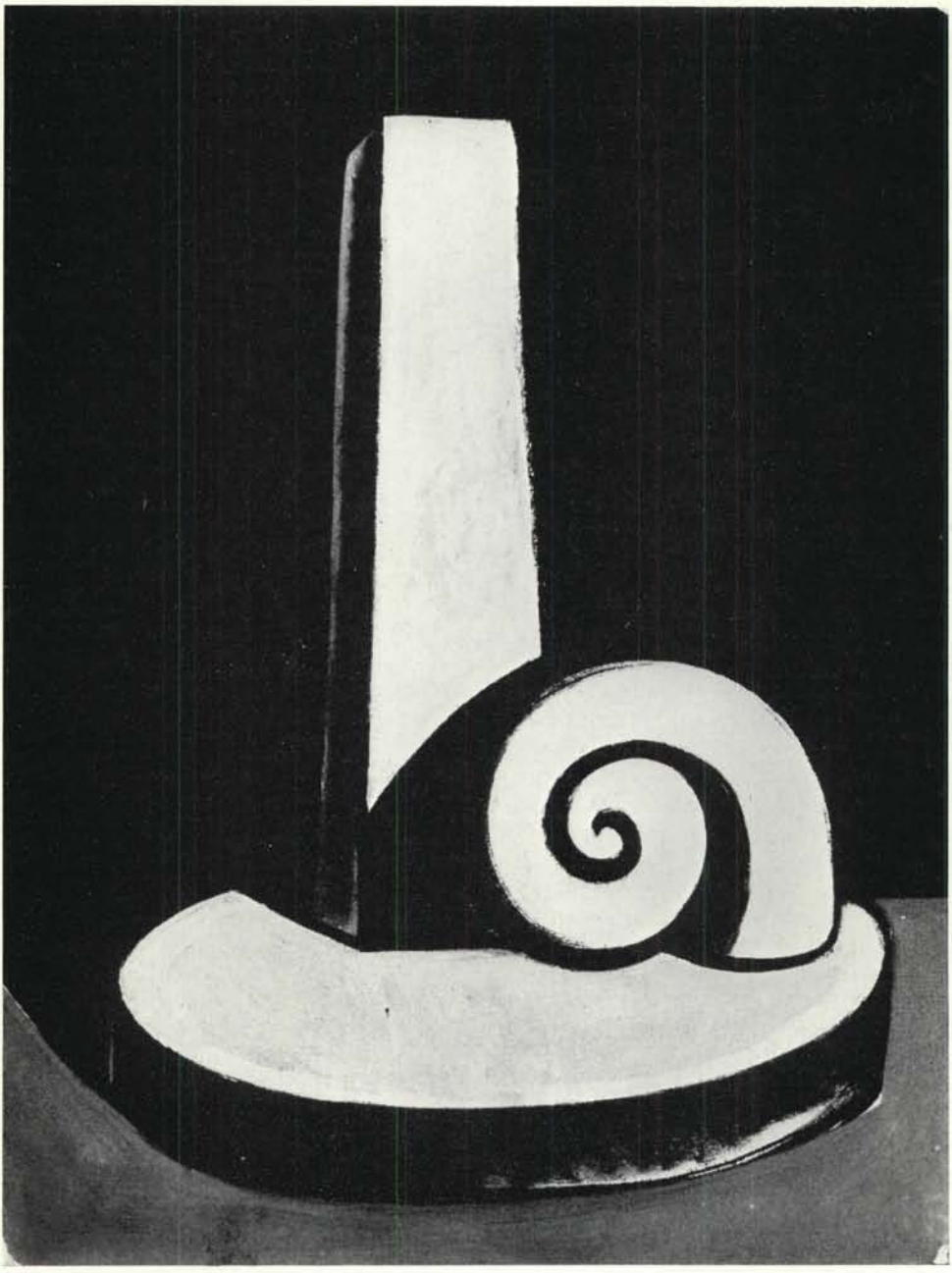

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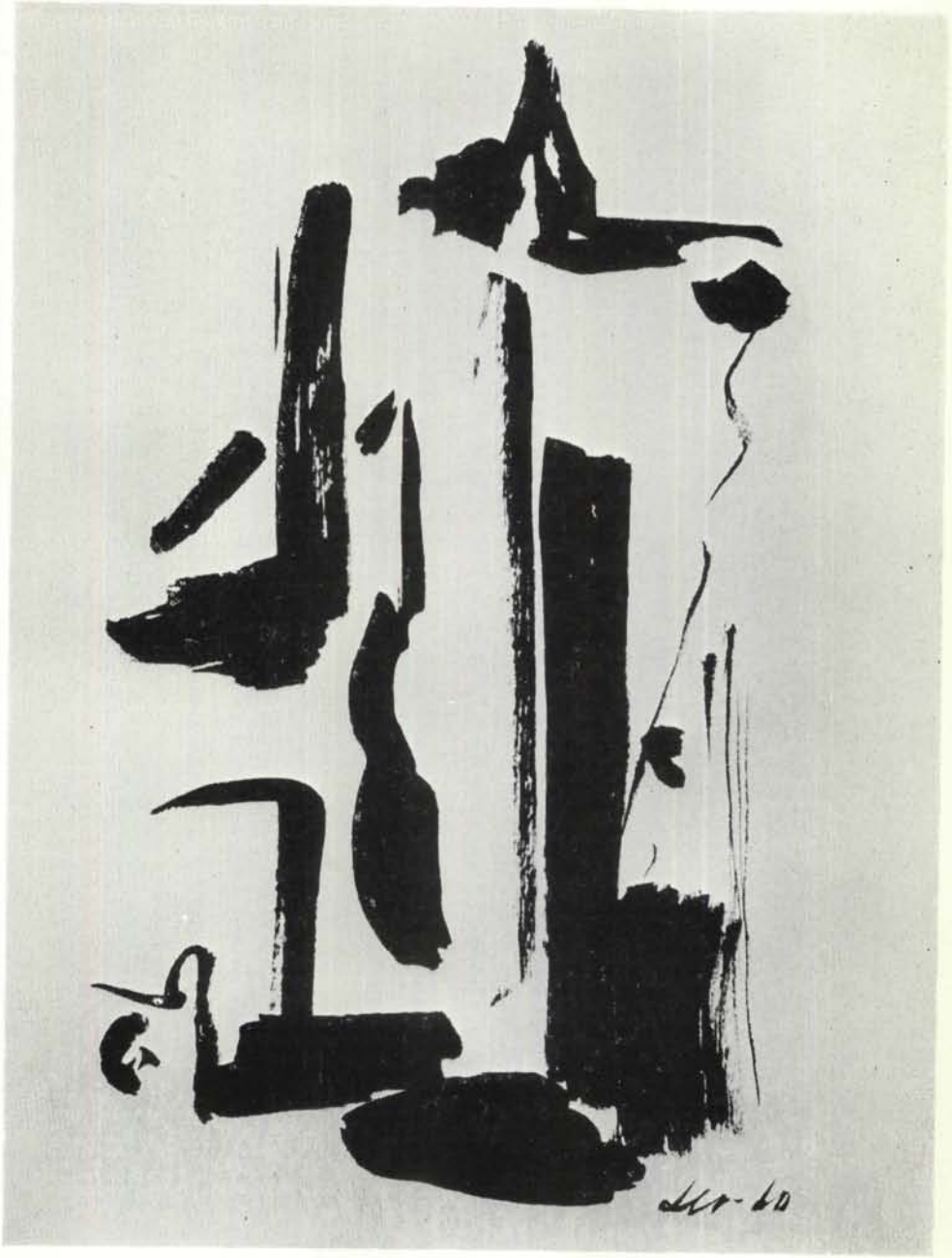

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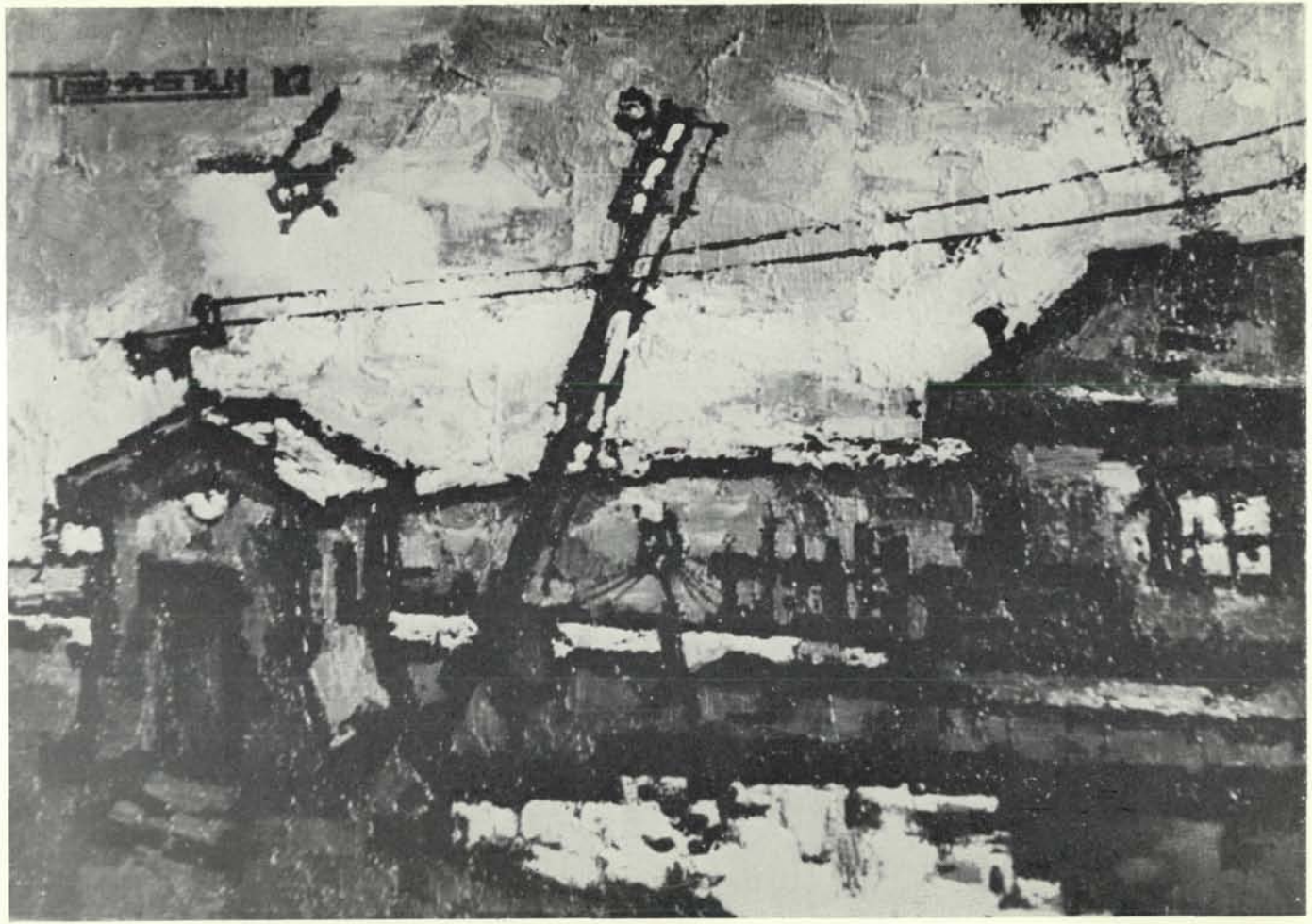

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